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BUNGAY CASTLE:

A NOVEL:

BY MRS. BONHOTE.

AUTHOR OF THE PARENTAL MONITOR, &c.

INTWO VOLUMES.

Astonished at the voice he stood amaz'd,
And all around with inward horror gaz'd.

ADDISON.

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BUNGAY CASTLE.

CHAP. I.

THOUGH every means had been made use of to render the ball given at the castle pleasant and agreeable to all the party, they did not succeed so well as we could wish. There were several of the company, as it is to this day found but too customary on all such important and interesting occasions, distressed, mortified, and discontented; who returned to their habitations with more

cares than they had carried out, more pangs than they well knew how to bear, or than the pleasure, if unalloyed, could have repaid. One or two young ladies had actually fainted at seeing others better dressed and more noticed than themselves. Another was wretched, and out of humour at observing the Adonis, for whom she had long cherished the most romantic affection, pay his whole attention to the beautiful Edeliza, who was rendered wild by the gaiety, novelty, and splendour of the scene, while her little head was nearly turned by the fine things said to her, and the admiration she excited.

Edwin secretly repined that, as soon as the evening closed, Madeline would be again for an age, in the calculation of a lover's calendar, secluded from his sight, and compelled to count her beads in the cheerless and solitary cell of a nunnery, from which he knew not whether it would be in the power of art or stratagem to deliver her,
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and how dreadful would be the consequence, both to himself and the woman he loved far better than himself, should the project, which he had long cherished in his enterprising and enamoured heart, be discovered ! These distressing thoughts threw a cloud of despondency over every surrounding scene, and in some degree deprived him of that vivacity which had endeared him to his friends, and rendered his society both pleasant and entertaining, while the cause of this unaccountable revolution was suspected but by few.

De Willows had never before felt himself so forcibly struck with the charms of the fond and artless Edeliza, which blazed upon him with unusual lustre, from the stile and manner in which she had adorned and heightened her modest beauties by the artillery of a dress admirably chosen to captivate ; and so well did she succeed, aided by the little blind god, under whose banners she had ventured to enlist, that a change

took place in the heart of her favourite, against whom alone her designs were levelled, as sudden as it was to himself surprising.

Madeline was almost forgotten, and as little regarded as his grandmother would have been. Every thought, every wish now rested with Edeliza,—the little girl whom he had so long considered and treated as a mere playful child. He even felt himself angry with every gentleman who paid her any attention, or appeared as well pleased with her as himself, and his bosom actually throbbed with jealous indignation while he observed her animated look and sparkling eye at the various compliments addressed to her; but when she bestowed her smiles on another it was agony.—Those enchanting smiles, those engaging looks, till this ill-fated evening, had been wholly engrossed by himself, nor, till he knew the value of what he might lose, did he think he had any thing to fear;—the delusion was ended, and he felt himself engaged in a new passion

sion at the moment he was disengaged from an old one, which, having never been cherished by hope, was the more easily subdued.

He observed (for love, though said to be blind, is at times amazingly clear sighted) that De Clavering, the insensible, the fastidious De Clavering, appeared like himself, particularly attentive to Edeliza, condescended to say some civil things, hovered as near to her as possible, and followed her with an approving eye, as she gracefully exhibited her light and elegant figure in the dance, which, in his opinion, by no means proved him so indifferent to her charms as he had pretended to be in some of their unreserved and confidential conversations. — He had declared to De Huntingfield, as she glided past them, that she had a mine of harmony in her head, a troop of Cupids lying in ambush round her eyes and mouth, and an army of virtues encamped for life within her bosom.—De Willows heard him,

and was convinced De Clavering had designs against his peace, and was as much in love as himself. The same charms which had so much influence on him might have made a captive of his friend.

Thus seriously in love, thus tortured by the sudden impulse of jealousy, De Willows suddenly cursed the folly of giving balls, execrated the misery of being obliged to mix with a crowd, and the unpardonable levity of permitting young women of delicacy and fashion to exhibit their beautiful persons and fine attitudes in the dance, to amuse a parcel of unmeaning and designing fools, and wound those who loved them,—while such robust amusements were only fit for Indian girls or Hottentots. He almost determined never to go to another ball, and to persuade Edeliza to form the same resolution.

Thus, with doubts, fears, and jealousies, was marked the beginning of a passion in
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the mind of De Willows, which ended but with life, and which every succeeding day, month, and year, served to strengthen and confirm.

The tragical tale of two lovers, who had been present at the ball, and who seemed the happiest of the party, appeared to make a deep impression on all who heard it, and had so much influence on De Willows, that he determined no part of his conduct should ever give a moment's pain to the susceptible heart of Edeliza, if he should prove so fortunate as to be entrusted with the precious deposit, and obtain the consent of Sir Philip and Lady de Morney to bless him with the hand of their lovely daughter. The tale we have alluded to, though melancholy, being a real fact, we hope it will not be unacceptable to our readers.

MR. and Mrs. Blandeville were the respectable parents of a numerous family, whom they educated from the produce of a well established and profitable business. They had several daughters; the eldest, who was both lively and handsome, was unfortunately admired by a young gentleman of the name of Narford. The attachment had been cherished by both parties from the time they went to school, and so marked were the attentions which, even at that early age, they had shewn to each other, that it had often excited the jokes and ridicule of their young companions, who were in the habit of frequently addressing the timid and blushing Lucy by the name of Mrs. Narford.

Her lover had the irreparable misfortune to lose both his parents before any plan had been formed for his future establishment.—

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He was likewise, unhappily for his interest, left to the care of inexperienced and careless guardians, who permitted him, as his fortune was genteel, to follow the bent of his own inclinations. His disposition being lively in the extreme, led him into innumerable eccentricities, and his juvenile indiscretions wasted a part of that fortune which should have been kept for his maturer age.

When his clerkship was just expired, (for he was articled to an attorney,) he made application to the parents of Lucy for leave to address their daughter. Mr. Blandeville was no stranger to some part of the vices and follies of which he had been guilty, but, as he likewise knew that enough of his fortune still remained to secure his daughter as comfortable an establishment as she had any right to expect, he promised, if his future conduct was irreproachable, that, when he was fixed in life, and able to provide for a family, he would give him the

hand of his daughter, and from that period he had permission to visit Lucy as a lover, and was received at Mr. Blandeville's house as one of the family.

Lovers, it is too well known, will say and promise any thing. This observation was unhappily verified in the giddy and erring Narford, who, though he sincerely loved the daughter of Mr. Blandeville, and could not be ignorant that on his part he was equally beloved, very soon broke his word, and ran into some glaring excesses, which could not be long concealed from those whom it most materially concerned. The gentle Lucy often ventured to reproach her lover, but his repentance and promises of amendment very soon procured his forgiveness.— Not so easily was the father to be softened. After repeatedly hearing of his intemperance and consequent riots, he forbade him his house, and prohibited his daughter from holding any further intercourse with one so unworthy of her regard, who had given such frequent

frequent proofs of his libertine disposition, had already wasted part of his property, and was in a way to squander the whole.

Unfortunately the prudent prohibition of the father was disregarded by the daughter, whose attachment to the unthinking Narford neither his vices nor follies had been able to conquer. She lamented his failings, but she could not subdue that attachment which had from so early a period of her life been implanted in her heart. From him only she had heard the tale of love, and he alone had obtained any interest in her affections. Love had bound her in his filken fetters, and she had not power to shake them off.

Many stolen interviews did the proscribed Narford obtain with his believing and inexperienced mistress by means of that all-prevailing traitor, gold, whose influence few of the needy children of dependence can long withstand; nor could all the reproaches

of a duteous and uncorrupted heart prevent Lucy from listening to the beguiling flatterer.

At the time they met at the Castle they had not been able to see each other for some weeks, and the pleasure was as great as it was unexpected. Their present situation and past sorrows were forgotten in their mutual joy, and the young lady easily prevailed upon to accept the hand of her lover for the evening, as she still hoped it was the hand destined to guide her through life.— Too happy in enjoying the society for which she languished to recollect the causes which had prevented their more frequent intercourse,—her spirits exhilarated by the gay and cheerful party, and the enlivening sounds of music, she listened to his vows with believing tenderness, and in a fond conceding moment unreluctantly agreed to his proposal of a private marriage:—the day was fixed, and the hour for escape appointed.

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The plan once determined, they indulged themselves in all that innocent fondness the prospect of being speedily united seemed to claim and authorise, but their happiness was as unstable and visionary as their plan. Some one that was present, either actuated by friendship to the parents, or envious at seeing the exulting transports which sparkled in the eyes of the lovers, and excited a suspicion of their design, obtained sufficient intelligence from some broken sentences (conveyed in rather loud whispers from the lips of Narford, who was too much intoxicated with his unexpected success to be guarded by prudence) as to betray their intention.

The next day a letter was sent to Mr. Blandeville, to inform him of the plan, that he might take such steps as would prevent the threatening mischief. In consequence of this unpleasing intelligence, the young lady was so strictly confined and closely watched, that it was impossible she could
either

either receive or send any letters without being discovered, and Mr. Blandeville was too much enraged at finding the disobedient trick his daughter would have played him, to relax one moment in his rigour or care to prevent her eloping.

Narford, in the mean time, not able either to see Lucy, or convey any letter or message to her, became madly desperate, and ran into innumerable excesses, which, in the opinion of the prudent and thinking part of the world, justified the conduct of the lady's father, who commanded her not to see him, nor attempt to leave her own apartment till she could prevail upon herself to give him a solemn promise never again to hold intercourse, by word or letter, with that base, designing, and vile scoundrel, Narford.

The mother and sisters were equally offended with the unfortunate lover, whose conduct, previous to the time he had been forbidden

forbidden the house of Mr. Blandeville, had in too many respects been highly blameable; but, as is frequently the case, what in his behaviour was worthy of praise had been concealed, while every deviation from prudence and rectitude was basely and maliciously exaggerated, Narford not having the happy art of concealing his frailties, or making himself friends, by that bewitching softness of manners which, in our more polished days, will recommend the most libertine characters, and procure them a favourable and cordial reception in polite and even virtuous circles.

After trying, by every art and stratagem to bribe, or elude, the vigilance of Lucy's attendants, and making many attempts to soften the displeasure of her parents, Narford, in a fit of despair and intoxication, obtained by force an entrance into the house, and, falling on his knees, in the most humiliating manner, and most intelligible language he could command, begged they
would

would permit him to see and converse one hour with his beloved Lucy, who he had heard was ill, and confined to her bed.

Though Mr. Blandeville fortunately was not at home, his request was peremptorily denied; but Mrs. Blandeville, somewhat softened by his agony, which, in spite of her anger, she could not help commiserating, promised, that, as soon as her daughter was in a state of convalescence, he should be indulged with seeing her in the presence of herself and one of her daughter; at the same time she could not help gently reproaching him for the inconsistency and unpardonable levity of his conduct, which not only compelled Mr. Blandeville to adopt these severe measures, but had involved her whole family in distress, as well as the unfortunate girl he pretended to love, and had attempted to draw aside from the paths of duty.

With great difficulty he was prevailed upon to leave the house, but not before the
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found of his voice had caught the ear of the unhappy Lucy. She raised herself in the bed, and insisted on being informed what had occurred to bring poor Narford, and why she had not seen him.—It was now too late, (she added,) to run away ; the danger of that was over ; therefore surely she might be allowed to speak peace to his mind, and once more see him whom she had so long and so fondly loved, before the hand of death should close her eyes for ever, and in that sad moment shut out every bright ray of hope from his earthly prospects.

On being made acquainted with what had passed, and told the manner in which her lover forced his way into the house, she burst into tears, and exclaimed, she should never see him more in this world ; “ but he will not survive me long, (she continued.) I know he cannot live in peace when I am gone, and therefore we shall soon meet in a better, and I hope a happier, world.”

These

These conflicts brought on a return of fever, which a frame so emaciated and weak as her's could not long sustain : it was succeeded by a delirium. The grief she had long cherished had preyed upon a constitution, always delicate, with so much violence as to render her strength unequal to the contest. In a few days her life was pronounced in the utmost danger, and hope was almost precluded.

No sooner was this sentence made known, than it was recommended to Mr. Blandeville to send for the lover of his daughter. At length he yielded somewhat reluctantly to the proposal. Narford came, and was admitted into the darkened apartment of the dying Lucy, who laid totally insensible of what passed around her. He heard her call upon his name, yet could not prevail upon her either to look at or speak to him.— Her eyes, glazed and obscured by the shades of death, and robbed of their former lustre, were no longer able to distinguish the beloved
object

object for whom they shed so many tears, but, fixed on vacancy, seemed still bent in search of something they wished to behold. Her lips moved, and she appeared as if holding conversation with some one her disordered imagination fancied near her. The unhappy young man was so much shocked, that it was with the utmost difficulty he could confine his agonizing feelings from breaking forth into loud lamentations.—Somewhat recovering from the first stroke of seeing the ruins which grief had made on her with whom he had rested all his hopes, in whom were centered all his wishes, he knelt by her bedside, and, tenderly clasping between his own the burning hand of his almost dying mistress, he softly begged she would once more speak to her distracted Narford.

The voice seemed to be understood ; she suddenly turned her face towards him, and feebly pressing his hand, in broken and hurried sentences said something to him.—Only the words, “ Dear Narford, we must
part,

part, and part for ever !” were understood ; and, after making a feeble effort to draw him closer to her side, as if afraid he should leave her, she was seized with convulsions, which obliged the terrified lover to quit the room. He rushed out of the house in a state little less alarming than that in which he had left the fair cause of his distress.

The whole night he wandered before the habitation of the dying Lucy,—for that she was dying the horrid scene he had witnessed, the countenances of those around her, and his own feelings, too well informed him. During the long and gloomy night, in which he remained exposed to and unsheltered from the wind and storm, he frequently stopped to listen at the door. All within was silent and cheerless as the grave, and in every sound that reached his ear from without, he imagined he could distinguish groans and sighs. Every object he could see brought to his tortured imagination the distressing, the convulsed figure of
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the once-animated and lovely Lucy, whose distorted features and painful struggles were ever before his mental sight, there to remain fixed as long as his existence should endure ; for was it possible he could ever forget or wish to lose the remembrance of that persecuted and innocent sufferer, who died for the unworthy, the unfortunate Narford ?

At length the day broke. The sun arose with its usual splendor, but appeared to him dark as Erebus. All nature wore one universal gloom, and had all nature been at that moment annihilated, (as were his hopes,) the change had been scarcely perceived ; for Lucy, who gave to life its brightest tints, and to all things animate or inanimate, grace, beauty, and value, was seen no more !—No longer the soft tones of her voice vibrated on his ear to lull his soul to peace, or, if seen, she had lost all recollection of the poor forlorn wanderer, who now felt ten-fold every pang she suffered.

Late

Late in the morning Narford saw a female servant slowly open the door. He ran, or rather flew, to make his trembling inquiries. She was in tears, and totally unable to tell him that all was over,—that the love-liest of women, the favourite child of nature, was no longer the victim of pain and sorrow, and that her freed spirit now soared beyond the reach of persecution, “the mortal having put on immortality;” but her emphatical silence unfolded the sad tale.—A freezing chilness ran thrilling to his heart, and with a groan of despair he sunk upon his parent earth. In that happy state of insensibility he was conveyed to his lodgings by some people who were passing by, where we will for the present leave him to the care of his sympathizing friends.

This unfortunate young man, notwithstanding his unguarded conduct and numerous eccentricities, was beloved by many for his generous disposition, cheerfulness, and unceasing good humour.

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In the house of Mr. and Mrs. Blandeville all was distraction, despair, and self-reproach. The illness and subsequent death of a beloved and amiable child laid heavy at their hearts, and overwhelmed them like the sudden bursting of a torrent; for, though prudence forbade them to unite their daughter to a man whose conduct threatened her with many sorrows, at the moment they wished to put an end to so unpromising an union, they had no idea that any fatal consequences would have attended the separation, and they too late regretted not having granted Narford's request of being permitted to see their daughter at a more early stage of her illness.—Mr. Blandeville drooped under his own painful reflections, his wife felt more than she either could or wished to express, and the younger part of the family were for a time inconsolable.

The tale spread rapidly abroad, and in all its various shapes excited the compassion
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of those who heard it. Lucy had been as generally beloved as admired, and Narford, who had once appeared deserving of contempt, was now the object of pity. Such are the rapid changes which take place in the human mind.

Mrs. Blandeville, unknown to the rest of the family, sent several times to make inquiries after the unhappy Narford. The accounts she received were as various as the melancholy changes which succeeded each other. He was sometimes in a state of actual distraction,—at others in a sad and silent despondency the most determined and alarming, refusing to take his food, or to hold conversation with any one.

At length the day for the interment of Lucy arrived. The procession, sad and slow, was followed by almost every inhabitant of the town and adjoining villages. A solemn dirge was sung as they went along, and a number of young maidens joined in
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the chorus. Flowers were strewn into and around the grave, as emblematical of the charming flower that like themselves was untimely cut down, and doomed like them to wither and to die.

The service began ;—the coffin was carefully let down into the grave, and, just as the earth was thrown upon it, and the priest pronounced that awful and humiliating sentence, — “ Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,” a figure, with dishevelled hair, and a face pale as that of the victim just deposited in her last sad resting place, rushed past them all, and quick as lightning, before any one could suspect or think of preventing his design, threw himself with the utmost violence into the grave, and, clinging with agonizing frenzy to the coffin, cried out, “ I have found her now, and no one shall ever again tear her from me, for she was mine,—mine by her own consent ! Proceed, (added he, in a shrill and

distracted tone, for the surprise and confusion that this scene occasioned had prevented the service going on,)—be quick, and hide me in the friendly earth !—I come to sleep with Lucy : — this is our bridal bed !—Why do you hesitate ?—here I shall find rest for ever :—this is my home, and here shall be my heaven !”

The priest endeavoured to persuade him to quit the grave, and let the ceremony be concluded, telling him, time and patience would, he hoped, reconcile him to the will of heaven, and convince him that all things were ordered for the best and the wisest purposes.

“ Avaunt, deceiver ! (cried the enraged maniac.)—I tell you that Lucy was unfairly robbed of life,—stolen from my arms, and forced into this place, where I will watch by her and protect her from farther violence ;—therefore say no more, lest my daring hand should attempt to pluck the
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sun from his orbit, or call upon the stars to fall upon your head, and mine for permitting a star more brilliant than themselves to fall.—Go on, I say,—bury me deep and sure!—I wish to become a worm, that I may crawl to the side of Lucy.—She will own her poor distracted Narford, even in that most loathsome and degraded form.”

It is impossible to describe the scene that followed. Many attempts were made before the poor young man could be dragged from the grave of his lamented mistress.—At length, he was forcibly taken out,—guarded, and carried home by some of the weeping spectators.

It was many months before any hopes of his recovery could be cherished. His reason was still more endangered, and, from that period to the end of his unfortunate life, he was deranged at times, and by his conduct appeared as much a lunatic in his

intervals of reason. He very soon squandered all that remained of his fortune, and became a wanderer upon the earth, never having a settled home, and seldom going into a bed.

He was frequently absent so long, that his friends concluded he was no more.— He would then return to those scenes which never failed to bring on a renewal of his unfortunate malady, and would lay whole nights by the side of Lucy's grave, talking to her with the same ardour and enthusiastic affection as if she had been living.

At length Mr. Blandeville, whom he would, as frequently as he saw him in his fits of insanity, attack with the most pointed and virulent abuse, took compassion on his sufferings, and settled a sum of money upon him, to be paid quarterly, sufficiently competent to procure him the necessaries and many of the comforts of life ; placing him in a family who had been long attached to

to him, and who continued to take the utmost care of him to the end of his wretched existence, and by every tender attention softened, as much as it was in human power, those sorrows which could only terminate in death.



CHAP. II.

A Tale so sad and interesting as that we have recited soon found its way to the inhabitants of the castle, particularly as De Clavering had been called in to the assistance of the dying Lucy.

The melancholy scene he witnessed, as we may imagine, made a lasting and forcible impression upon a heart so tender and susceptible as his, and he did not fail to make such comments upon it, as he hoped would have some weight on the minds of those to whom

whom they were addressed ; but he did not succeed in his design ; for, whatever Sir Philip de Morney might think, he chose, and took care to keep to himself, and the Baron not even condescending to make any observations on a subject in which he did not appear to feel the least interested, and which he considered as being too romantic and childish to merit the attention of a person in his high station.

Lady de Morney and the young people wept for the fate of Narford and Lucy, while the latter wondered any parents could be so cruel as to separate such fond and faithful lovers.

Notwithstanding the utmost pains had been taken to conceal the cause of the Baron's sudden indisposition, it had in part transpired, owing, as we may presume, to the irresistible propensity, and restless curiosity, the Baron's servant felt to know all his master's secrets, and his great eagerness to

impart them when known. Some words, which had dropped from the Baron to his friend Sir Philip, the evening of the alarm, just as Pedro was ordered out of the room, unfortunately caught his ear, which was instantaneously applied to the key-hole of the door to obtain farther intelligence; and, though he could not so exactly understand the story as to connect it with accuracy, he picked up enough of it to make him desirous of knowing the whole; and, having heard the word ghost uttered more than once with great emphasis, it gave him some suspicion that his master's illness originated from a fright, and the more than usual earnestness, with which he asserted the truth of what he had been saying, confirmed Pedro in this opinion.

Thus the half-formed tale was whispered under the most solemn promises of secrecy from one to another, till every servant in the family had gleaned up something, without any one of them knowing what it meant.

A few

A few nights after, as Pedro was attending his master, when he was going to bed, he determined to make one effort to discover the whole story, and try whether he could not prevail on the Baron to entrust him with a secret he would have given some part of his wages to find out. He opened this important business as follows.

“ I shall be heartily glad, my lord, when we get from this castle, and return to your own.”

“ Why so ? (inquired his master :)—my friend, Sir Philip, is very hospitable, and his family infinitely charming.”

“ Yes, yes, I dare say, my lord, in your opinion the young ladies are charming creatures, and I fancy they are not a whit less pleased with your lordship.”

“ Do you think so, Pedro ? (said the Baron, in one of his most harmonious tones, his pride and self-love being gratified by his servant's observation.)—Why, indeed, I had

never much reason to complain of the ladies' coolness."

"It would certainly be surprising if you had, my lord. A man of your rank, fortune, and figure, is not very likely to meet with coldness; it is only such a poor ugly dog as I am that must expect to be frowned upon by the women."

"Oh! then, Pedro, (said the Baron smiling,) a disappointment in love makes you wish to quit this place."

"No, my lord. I complain of nothing in the day; *that* generally passes off very well; but, in the night, there are so many cursed ghosts clattering about, with such confounded noises at their heels, both within and without doors, that a man can neither sleep nor move with comfort or security."

"Psha! (replied the Baron,) let me hear of no such idle and improbable tales.—I did not suppose you so great a fool or so dastardly a coward as to mind the nonsense of women and children."

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“As to that, (said Pedro, nettled by the contemptuous manner of the Baron, and the epithet of coward,) I have as much courage as most men among *men*; but, when I am forced to mix with ghosts and evil spirits, I want a little spice of that courage with which your lordship is so bountifully endowed. I dare say, my lord, you never saw a ghost, and were never frightened either by the living or the dead.”

“What should I be frightened at? (cried the Baron impatiently;) let me hear no more such impertinent nonsense.”

“I hope (muttered Pedro) the next time they come, they will pay you another visit. It is an honour due to your dignity, and we servants can very well dispense with their company;” but this was said in so low a voice, as he shut the door, that it was impossible to be understood by the imperious master to whom it was addressed. “As much a coward as I am, (continued he, as he went along,) I was never frightened into

a fit as some folks have been with all their boasted courage and great knowledge.”

Notwithstanding the Baron was so much alarmed by the appearance of his Isabella, that he could scarcely shake it from his mind a moment, and remained in a state of anxiety and terror, yet it was impossible he should be any longer blind to the dejection of Roseline, or insensible of her cold indifference. If she met him with a smile, it was visibly the smile of anguish. She sometimes appeared to avoid him, and more than once had made an effort to leave him at the very instant he was addressing her in one of his fondest and most impassioned speeches.— Sir Philip was his friend; on him he had conferred many favours: it was both his interest and inclination to bring about an union between him and his daughter. It was possible he might have deceived him as to the real situation of her heart;—the thought was too alarming to his feelings and his pride to be easily got rid of. Roseline
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was often absent, and that for several hours together : it looked suspicious. He would no longer trust either the father or the daughter ; but, with the assistance of his man Pedro, who was a shrewd fellow at finding out a secret, he would endeavour to discover whether he was not right in his conjecture of having a rival. Sir Philip had certainly promised more for his daughter than he supposed him authorised to do, or than the young lady herself was able or willing to ratify : he determined therefore to get rid of his doubts as soon as possible, and either obtain the prize he had in view, or withdraw himself for ever from the castle.

Audrey, who had in the mean while picked up a vague unconnected account of what had happened in respect to the ghost, was eager to tell the wonderful tale to Roseline, who, though incredulous as she had ever appeared to all the marvellous tales she had imparted to her, ought to be informed of this, she thought, as it was so connected with

with the history of her intended husband. She luckily met her young lady on the stairs, put her finger on her lips to impose silence, and, with much solemnity in her look and manner, beckoned her to follow her into the gallery, when, stepping into the first room she came to, she thus eagerly began.

“ Well, miss, it was as I said ; the Baron is no better than he should be. I have waited successfully these three days to tell you so ; but you are grown so preserved and so shy, a body can seldom catch a moment to speak to you.”

“ What is the matter, my good Audrey ?”

“ Matter enough on my conscience, if one believes all one hears ! Only think, miss, of a ghost, that should have been minding its business at the Baron’s own castle, having taken the trouble of following him to this upon some special business it had to municate. However, travelling three or four hundred miles is nothing to a ghost,
that

that can, as I have heard, go at the rate of a thousand miles in a minute, either by land, sea, or water, it matters not to them ; but we could have expenced with such visitors, God help us ! for we have enow such that go with the castle, and, 'tis said, must do so till the day of judgment."

Roseline, who paid but little attention to Audrey's tales, smiled at this, and gave her a sly look of incredulity, which convinced her of her unbelief. This was a kind of claim upon her to confirm it more strongly.

" Well, you may think as you please, Miss Roseline, the Baron was actilly scared into a fit of arpaplexy at seeing his own wife, all in white, the very moral of herself when alive ; and, what is more, she held a knife and a lighted candle in her hand, and shewed him the wound in her bosom which casioned her death ; and she sneered at him, shaked her ghostly head, grinned, and, as he was
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found upon the floor, 'tis supposed she knocked him down, and then went away in a sky-rocket, or a squib, or some such thing, as belong to those sort of hanimals; for the noise she made at going off was so great and amendous, it broke the drum of Pedro's ear, and left the Baron in a state of sensibility."

"I would advise you, Audrey, (said Roseline,) not to give credit to such improbable tales, and never again to repeat this which you have been telling me."

"'Tis genevin, miss, I assure you. I had it from Pedro's own mouth; so, if you are determined to marry a man haunted by the ghost of another wife, you must abide by the incision. She was certainly sent out of the world unfairly, or why should she not rest in her grave as quietly as other folks?"

Roseline, much as she disliked the Baron as a lover, had too much respect for her father's friend to permit her servant to speak
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of him so freely, and to lay so dreadful a crime to his charge, which she concluded, like the story of the ghost, was merely the invention of evil-minded people. — She therefore reproved Audrey with a seriousness that alarmed her, and assured her, if she ever again presumed to mention Baron Fitzosbourne in terms so disrespectful and degrading, she would instantly request her father to send her from the castle.

The prating Abigail, finding her young lady really displeased, chose to alter her tone. — To be sure she might have been wrong informed ; the world was a wicked place, and some people were sadly entreated in it : — the Baron was a gentleman, — a powerful fine gentleman it was successively hard to be belied ; — no one could expence with that : — he was a lord into the bargain, and, notwithstanding his methodicalness, had some good qualities, and, for certain, was as fine a pice of 'tiquity as any that hung up in the great hall, and looked as antic as the

the old walls covered with ivory.—Roseline made no answer to this curious eulogium, and Audrey very soon took herself away.

The Baron was not long in determining how to proceed. He became resolute to satisfy his doubts respecting his having a rival. It was neither improbable, nor unlikely, that some of the young officers, stationed in or about the castle, might have designs inimical to his. The lady herself might have favoured their pretences unknown to her father ; and, if so, he should run some risk in making her his wife.—The thought was too painful and degrading to be supported, and the critical situation of affairs would not admit of longer deliberation.

The month was on the very eve of terminating, at the expiration of which Sir Philip had promised him the hand of his daughter ; yet the young lady was not more conciliating, or less coy and distant in her behaviour
to

to him, than she had been the first day of their meeting. Pedro was summoned, and for some time was closeted with his master. He was promised a liberal reward if he could get into the good graces of the female servants, and make himself master of the young lady's secrets; luckily for our heroine, she had not made a confidant of any one of them.

This Pedro undertook, as he had already began to make love to Audrey, who, in her moments of conceding tenderness, had told him all she knew, making some additions of her own; but the whole amounted to but little more than—her young lady was strangely altered: it might be, her love for the Baron had produced this change; but, for her part, she could not think it possible for any one to like such an old frampled figure.

The Baron next proposed that Pedro should accompany him, in taking a ramble
about

about the castle, after the family had retired to rest, to reconnoitre the premises, and learn, if possible, from what quarter they were most exposed to danger. He determined to explore all the secret passages, for he could not help cherishing suspicions that lovers might be admitted, and intrigues carried on, unknown to the most watchful and careful parent; and to what but the prevailing influence of a favoured rival could he impute the uncommon and increasing coldness of Roseline?

It was not to be wondered at that the Baron was alarmed, for the conduct of his daughter had not escaped the eyes of Sir Philip, who, chiefly displeased with what he termed her obstinacy and caprice, in order to compel her to his purpose, had, notwithstanding he promised to drop the subject for a month, found it necessary to caution her to be more guarded and respectful in her behaviour, at the same time assuring her he would not survive the disappointment
of

of his hopes, in seeing her united to his friend; adding another horrid threat, that, if she betrayed his design, in that moment she would terminate her father's existence.

This dreadful sentence at once determined the fate of the unhappy Roseline, and, having no alternative left, she instantly promised to give her hand to the Baron, and sacrifice her own happiness to preserve the life of her father, on which she knew that of her mother depended. Her brothers and sisters too! how could she support the thought of depriving them of a father's protection, and become herself a parricide!—Her own sufferings would be but short;—their's might be continued through a long and weary pilgrimage.

Her father, satisfied with her promise, retired, and left her to recover herself. Then it was she recollected her engagement, and thought of the prisoner. Her resolution faltered, and reason tottered on its throne.

The

The dreadful fate she was preparing for him,—the distress her loss and inconstancy would inflict on the interesting object, dearer to her than life, or ten thousand worlds, tortured her to distraction, and shook her whole frame: the blood of life receded from her heart for a few moments, and she fell to the earth.

Soon however she recovered to a more perfect sense of her miseries: she wrung her hands;—she would see her Walter;—she would continue to do so till she became the property of him whom she detested, and could never love, and who, she fervently prayed, might be deprived of claiming the rights of a husband, by her being snatched from his embraces by the friendly hand of death, a rival, which, if he did not fear, he could neither injure nor subdue; and she should have the delightful, the soul-consoling satisfaction of descending to the grave a spotless victim to her love of Walter. Her spirit would perhaps be permitted to guard him

him from danger, and watch his footsteps, while he remained on earth, and in heaven she could meet and claim him as her own.

These thoughts, romantic as they appear in the eye of reason and experience, had a wonderful effect upon her mind, and restored it in some degree to its usual tone and composure. She became more resigned to her fate, and to the above-mentioned determinations added another, namely, that, before she became a wife, she would write to her unfortunate lover, and explain the motives that had induced her to break her engagement with him, sufficiently to exculpate her from blame, prevent his execrating and hating the name of Roseline, and if possible still to preserve his esteem. Edwin should be the messenger she would entrust with her letter. These weighty matters settled in the only manner that could make them conformable to the present state of her feelings, she resolved silently and without complaining to yield to a sentence from which,

which, however unjust and arbitrary, she knew there could be appeal, no chance of a reprieve.

Her determination and unconditional consent were soon made known to the Baron by his delighted and exulting friend, who now ventured a few gentle reproaches for the little confidence that had been placed in his word, and the injustice which had been shewn to his zeal. The Baron received this intelligence with unaffected pleasure,—apologized for his lover-like doubts, which had originated from the superior merits of the beloved object, and the disparity of years, which some ladies might have considered as an objection to an union taking place.

Superb dresses were to be ordered for the bride, new carriages built, and the lawyers set to work with all possible expedition; for, as Roseline had stipulated for no certain time being allowed her, to prepare for the awful change which was to take place

in her situation, her father, eager to ~~put it~~ beyond the power of any earthly ~~contingency~~ to disappoint his wishes, ~~availed~~ himself of the omission, and determined to hurry matters as much as possible. In fact, the horror of her father's vow had impressed itself so deeply on the mind of Roseline, and introduced such a train of distracting images, as lessened the apprehension of what might happen to herself.

It was now publicly said, that the important event was very soon to take place, and the joyous bustle which succeeded plainly shewed, the report was not without foundation. The surprise and consternation of Edwin are not to be described : he sought and obtained an interview with his sister, who, without absolutely betraying her promise to her father, or explaining how her consent had been extorted, said enough to convince him that compulsion, in some shape or other, had been made use of to force her into measures so entirely repugnant to her feelings

feelings, that he feared would involve her in irretrievable wretchedness, and he took his resolutions accordingly.

The enamoured lover, after hearing such unexpected and pleasant intelligence from his friend, requested an audience with the lovely arbitress of his fate. He was accordingly admitted.

Roseline made no attempt to deny having given her consent to become his wife ; but the freezing coldness of her manner, and the continued dejection still visible on her artless and expressive countenance, served to increase his doubts ; and, so far was it from exciting his compassion, it awakened his pride, confirmed his suspicions, and roused them into action : but, as he had no clue to guide him, and could make no discovery sufficiently conclusive to fix his jealousy on any particular object, he was under the necessity of trusting to chance, and his own unremitting endeavours, to unravel the mystery

tery he suspected. Actuated by a sullen kind of resentment, he determined at all events to avail himself of the power thrown into his hands to obtain his desires, resolving, if ever he discovered she loved any man in preference to himself, to sacrifice the detested object of her regard to the just vengeance of an injured husband.

A few nights after, a favourable opportunity presenting itself, the restless Baron, accompanied by his man Pedro, who had undertaken to conduct him about those parts of the castle contrived to defeat the designs of men when they came with any hostile intentions, but which might be favourable to those of an artful lover, began his silent perambulation.

After descending from the battlements, which he had cautiously paced over, looking into every place he thought likely to conceal the rival he expected to find, he returned by a different route, and accident-

ally went down the winding stairs of the South tower. The door, leading to the prisoner's apartment, he passed in silence, supposing it a lodging-room belonging to the guards, or some of the domestics. — When, however, he came to the bottom of the stairs; turning to look under a kind of arch-way that seemed to communicate with some other apartments, he was startled, and his doubts received farther confirmation from seeing a door, which led to the dungeon, standing open,—a circumstance that served to convince the Baron all was not right, as those places were in general kept well secured, not only to guard against danger, but to prevent their being seen, as it often happened the safety of the castle depended entirely upon the secret contrivances for their internal defence being unknown to all but the governor.

It happened unfortunately, that Albert, who, after he knew the family were in bed, had descended from his own room in order

to fetch something which his master wanted from his former habitation, not supposing he was in danger of being followed by any one, had incautiously neglected to shut this door after him. The Baron, not doubting but he was on the eve of making some important discovery, ordered his man to guard the door, to prevent any one escaping while he proceeded in his search.

Albert, luckily hearing some one enter the passage after him, had likewise his suspicions, though of a very different nature. He concluded no one could come to that place with any good design, and trembled lest some discovery had been made respecting the removal of his master, which might expose him to farther persecutions, and bring on a renewal of his former miseries. Whoever it might be, he determined, if possible, to find out their intention.

Edwin had acquainted him with every circumstance he knew in regard to the dis-

treffing situation of his sister, and they had agreed not to inform the unfortunate Walter of the impending storm which threatened him with the deprivation of a treasure far dearer to him than his own existence, and which they concluded would at one fatal blow rob him not only of every hope that he had so long and fondly cherished, but even of life itself.

Albert was soon convinced that the person who had followed him was no other than the haughty imperious Baron, the rival of his beloved master, and the destroyer of that fabric on which he had rested his security for happiness. He carried a lighted candle in one hand, and a drawn sword in the other, and appeared wondrously curious about something which Albert, not in the humour to put the most favourable construction on his actions, concluded must be mischief.— Thus put upon his guard, he cautiously locked the door which led to his master's former apartments, and, as he was well acquainted

quainted with every avenue, each turning and winding in the curious labyrinths of these cheerless regions, he had no fears for his own safety, knowing that it was easy to elude the search of one who was a stranger to them; but, as he did not suppose the Baron (let the business which brought him there be what it might) came entirely unattended, it behoved him to act with the utmost circumspection.

In a little time he observed the Baron had entered the damp unwholesome square that was furrounded by the still more gloomy and unfriendly habitations contrived to render life a worse punishment than the most cruel death. He looked carefully into every one of them, and, coming to that in which stood the coffin before mentioned in this narrative, and seeing the black cloth, by which it had once been covered, now hanging in mouldering and tattered fragments around it, a silent memento of that destroying hand which spares neither the dead nor

the living, urged, as we may suppose, by one of those sudden and irresistible impulses which we are often actuated to obey against the dictates of sober reason, he stepped in, and in an attitude of thoughtful meditation, struck with the horrid scenes which till now his eyes had never encountered, unknowing what he did, he placed one foot on the top of the sad receptacle, on which his looks were bent in serious reflection, when, awful and dreadful to relate, a deep groan issued from the coffin, and a voice exclaimed,—
“Forbear, you hurt me!—you will crush my bones to powder!”

The Baron started, and flew back so violently, that he struck his head against the opposite wall. — A moment's reflection, however, served to inspire him with more resolution, and to convince him that this could not be real;—it must be the wild effects of his own distempered imagination;—the dead were never heard to speak, and why a voice from the grave should be sent to him
he

he could not comprehend. He determined therefore not to be alarmed, nor driven from his purpose ; when, in the next instant, the same voice, as if it knew the thoughts which floated in his mind, addressed him a second time in a rather louder and more authoritative tone from another part of the dungeon, and warned him not to interrupt the peaceful slumbers of the dead. Again called upon, it could not be delusion. Some one,—a lover perhaps, was concealed in that coffin, from which he was to be frightened like a school-boy. In an instant, with one violent blow, he crushed the mouldering abode of its insensible inhabitant to pieces, and a heap of bones were then presented to his sight, which had once belonged to a creature like himself, endowed perhaps with feelings more generous and humane than those which dwelt in the bosom of the man who had thus insulted its humble remains.

“ Cause my bones to be decently put in the grave ! (said the voice a second time

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from

from the coffin,) and from me fear nothing, but tremble for yourself!"—Now rendered desperate by terror, and shocked at the recollection of the scene he had encountered, the Baron eagerly wished to get from a situation so calculated to instill every kind of fear into the mind, if unaccompanied by the still greater horrors which had so wonderfully occurred to increase them; but, well knowing, if he were discovered in such a situation, it must subject him to various suspicions, among which those of a treasonable nature might probably be numbered.—He determined to brave it out, and retire without making any alarm, not doubting but an explanation would equally expose him to censure and ridicule.

As a last effort, however, he mustered courage enough to inquire in a tremulous tone, "What is it I hear?—If a man, let him come forth, and declare his wrongs; I will undertake to defend and right them."

"Can

“Can the man (replied his mysterious companion, who now appeared to be close to him) expect being believed when he offers to revenge wrongs of which he never heard a complaint? Can he who oppresses others, and is deaf to the sufferings of innocence, think to purchase pardon by the appearance of mercy?—Mend your own heart:—leave this castle:—then the living and the dead will sleep in peace.”

The Baron now shook with terror, and called for no farther explanation, but, as quickly as his trembling legs could carry him, began to explore the same way back by which he had gained admittance. Just as he reached the bottom of those stairs which Edwin and his fair companions had so often descended to make their benevolent visits to the prisoner, his ear was again arrested by the same invisible monitor. “Rob not this castle of its treasure:—search to find one more dear, whom you may render

happy, who long has suffered imprisonment and wrongs."

Again he stopped. The words vibrated on his ear, and then all was silent. At length he proceeded in his miserable progress, and distinguished the distant sound of footsteps, which he concluded were the centinels on guard, and was soon afterwards revived by hearing the watch proclaim the hour of night. He now eagerly rushed onwards, and found, though Pedro had not deserted his post, he was fast locked in the arms of sleep, and snoring as soundly as if his weary limbs had rested on a bed of down. He was awakened by a hearty shake from his master, and ordered to lead the way to his chamber.

Pedro, glad to be released from an employment for which he had no great relish, rejoiced at hearing the welcome mandate, and humbly inquired if he had made any discovery. The answer he received was,—
that

that all was safe and quiet in the castle, and that he believed his fears and suspicions had been hastily formed, and had no foundation.

The Baron, however, was not exactly in that state of serenity and composure of which he endeavoured to assume the appearance.— That voice!— what could it mean?—from whom, and from what quarter could it come?—It might be the echo of some one confined in a cell over his head, or beneath his feet. It could not allude to him, or it might be a contrivance to alarm him from his purpose; yet, if he mentioned it to his friend, he would treat it as the delusion of a distempered fancy.

All he could determine upon doing was to hasten the preparations for his marriage, and, if Roseline should be over-ruled by her father, and give him her hand with reluctance, the fault would bring its punishment upon their own heads; but he still hoped that, when once she became his wife,
and

and saw herself surrounded with splendor, her coy airs would be done away : she would set a proper value on his love and generosity, and as Baroness Fitzosbourne be the happiest of her sex.—With such consoling and fallacious hopes he endeavoured to banish his doubts, and compose himself to rest, and, soon forgetting Isabella, and the warning voice of his invisible monitor, he sunk into the arms of sleep.

C H A P.

CHAP. III.

NOT so soon, nor so easily, did the artless, the devoted Roseline lose the remembrance of her heart-felt sorrows. Every hour, every moment, as it fled, brought with it an increase of anguish to her agitated mind. The most distant idea of an union with the Baron was scarcely to be borne, as the certainty of it no longer admitted of a doubt, she shrunk from her own reflections as she would have done from the stroke of death. To be for ever torn from Walter—to see him no more,—no more to converse

verse with and soothe the sorrows of that oppressed and solitary sufferer,—was by far a more insupportable trial than that she was doomed to endure in her own mind and person.

From the world and its unsatisfactory pleasures she could expect no resource :—friends she had none whose power could remove her distresses : her only hope therefore rested on death to release her from persecution, and the reflection most tormenting to the giddy and happy children of prosperity, who consider life as their greatest treasure, and over whose minds a thought of its termination will throw a gloom in the midst of their gayest moments, proved to our heroine her only consolation. She now considered the shortness and uncertainty of life as its greatest blessing, and feared that time, of whom she had often complained for being so rapid and unmarked in its flight, would now torture her by moving in a slow and sluggish pace to the close
of

of her days. She continued, as usual, to make her stolen visits to the prisoner as opportunities presented themselves; but these visits were no longer attended with pleasure or satisfaction. In her own mind she formed a resolution, even if the consequence should prove fatal to herself, to attempt obtaining the freedom of the prisoner as soon as she had lost her own. This she considered merely as an act of humanity and justice, and would have thought no sacrifice too great, could she have restored that peace of which she knew her loss would deprive him.

Walter, notwithstanding much pains were taken to prevent his making any discovery of what passed in the castle, observed so alarming an alteration in the manners, countenance, and spirits, of Roseline, as led him to puzzle himself with various conjectures respecting the cause; but, as he had been often told by Albert many things occurred in the world to harass and give uneasiness to those who were engaged in its busy scenes,
of

of which he could form no idea, being a stranger to their nature, it was impossible for him to judge of their effect. He therefore determined not to enter on a topic which might wound the feelings of Roseline, and could not fail proportionably to distress himself; and as he would, had it been in his power, have prevented her knowing the slightest pang of sorrow, to her he resolutely remained silent on a subject in which his heart was so much interested, as seldom to allow his thinking on any other. To Albert, indeed, he ventured to make known his tormenting apprehensions; but, as Albert was now guided by the direction of Edwin, he only returned such evasive answers to his questions and complaints, as just served to keep hope from sinking into absolute despondency.

Edwin had reposed an unbounded confidence in De Clavering, De Willows, and Hugh Camelford, in regard to his sister, and without reserve informed them of his
own

own engagements with Madeline, who had received the positive commands of her father to enter on the year of her noviciate. His situation was now become desperate; the crisis had arrived which admitted of no alternative. He must either give up the connexion, or make some effort to secure the prize he had taken such unwearied pains to obtain. His friends promised secrecy and assistance in whatever way he should find it convenient to put their sincerity to the test. He had likewise separately introduced them into the apartment of the prisoner, and if, before they saw him, they found themselves disposed to pity and respect him, they were now actuated by the personal regard they could not help feeling in his behalf, which his manners and understanding failed not to inspire in such liberal minds. Hugh Camelford declared himself ready to tie in his defence, and to encounter a host of evils to procure his freedom.

Preparations

Preparations were now began, and the day fixed for the wedding. The marriage ceremony was to be performed in the chapel of the nunnery by father Anselm, and, as Roseline made no effort to stop or postpone the proceedings, none but the parties most intimately concerned had an idea that she felt any reluctance to become a bride.

Edeliza and Bertha were half wild with joy : they were to be met at the altar by the abbess, Madeline, and Agnes de Clifford ; the two latter intended to officiate as bridesmaids with the Miss de Morneys. — To describe the various feelings of the parties would fill a volume. Suffice it then to say, that Lady de Morney, far from engaging in the necessary arrangements with pleasure and alacrity, never looked at the dejected countenance of her daughter without feeling a severe reproof from the silent monitor which she, like every other mortal, carried in her bosom. Sir Philip exulted in having managed matters so cleverly as to carry his
point

point (a point to which the necessity of his circumstances reduced him) with less difficulty than he expected, and the Baron, resting satisfied that no woman in her senses could dislike him, or be insensible to the advantages that an union with a man of his rank and character would procure her, determined no longer to encourage either doubts or fears as to her shyness and reluctant compliance. It might, as her father had asserted, proceed from her inexperience, her love for her parents, and her ignorance of the world. In this delusion we must for the present leave him, in order to return to those for whose happiness we confess ourselves more interested.

Roseline, who was obliged to confine her conflicts chiefly to her own bosom, saw the preparations going forward with that settled and silent despair, which, at the moment it evinced her fortitude, would have shewn to those acquainted with the nature
of

of her feelings that every hope was precluded.

Edeliza and Bertha were astonished that their sister could see the rich clothes, and all the paraphernalia of her bridal dress, with such indifference. The former secretly thought she should not be able to shew so much composure if she were as soon to give her hand to her favourite De Willows.

The passion, which this young beauty had cherished in her innocent bosom, had “grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength,” and, lately encouraged to hope meeting an equal return from the increasing attention of the beloved object, it remained no longer in her power to conceal her partiality, and De Willows, attached and grateful for being so flatteringly distinguished, only waited till the marriage of her sister had taken place to make known his inclinations to Sir Philip, not less anxious than his lovely enslaver to have his pretensions

sions authorised by the approbation and consent of her father ; but he was not without his fears that the ambition, which had of late taken such full possession of the governor's mind, might disapprove his aspiring to unite himself with a descendant of the De Morneys.

The day before the marriage was to take place, Roseline made several attempts to enter the prisoner's apartment without being able to accomplish her purpose. At length she sent to speak with her brother Edwin in her chamber, and begged of him never to forsake the dear, the unhappy Walter, when she should be far distant. She then gave him a letter to deliver to her unfortunate lover as soon as she had left the castle. Of Madeline she proposed taking leave in person. On her brother's affairs she dared not trust herself to converse, confessing that her own distresses rendered her unable to talk, or even think, of his being as wretched as herself.

Edwin

Edwin in reply said but little ; his mind seemed agitated and employed on something he did not appear inclined to communicate. He readily agreed to comply with her request to accompany her for the last time to the apartment of Walter.

They found the solitary sufferer more composed and more cheerful than they had seen him for some time ; Albert too appeared lively and active. Roseline was welcomed by her lover in a language far more expressive than words, and as perfectly understood : his eyes rested on her pallid and death-like countenance, with a fond, yet chastened delight, which she thought she had never observed in them before ; he took her hand, pressed it to his lips, and looked up to her with that kind of adoration which he would have felt in the presence of an angel. He did not seem to notice the dejection which Roseline every moment expected would have occasioned some tender inquiries. Edwin began to converse on in-

different

different subjects ; but the silent anguish he saw his sister vainly endeavouring to conceal rendered him very unfit for the office he had undertaken. The lovers were never less inclined to talk. The prisoner had taken the hand of Roseline on her first entrance, and retained the willing captive without its making one struggle to regain its freedom, till she was startled by a tear that fell upon it.

Nature, how powerful, how all-subduing, is thy simple but prevailing influence ! The tenderest speech could not have said half so much as this precious and expressive tear.— Till this moment our heroine had preserved the appearance of fortitude ; but now the mask fell to the ground, and she could no longer keep up the character of heroism she had assumed. By a kind of convulsive pressure of his hand, he perceived she noticed his silent agitations, and it acted with the rapidity of electricity on feelings which he found could no longer be restrained.

“ My dear Walter, (said Roseline, giving him a look that penetrated to his heart,) why will you thus distress yourself and me ? You know not, you can never know, how dear you are to the ill-fated Roseline de Mörney, whom ere long you will perhaps execrate, and wish you had never seen ; but forbear, in pity forbear to load me with a curse, that would indeed destroy me.” Suddenly recollecting herself, she added,— “ Walter will not be so unjust !— He will pity, pardon, and respect, her, who will not be able to forgive herself if she make him wretched.”

“ Wretched ! (exclaimed the agitated lover,)—Can I ever be wretched while you thus kindly condescend to sooth my sorrows,—thus generously confess that I am dear to you, and possessed of your heart ? —Can it be in the power of fate to make me otherwise than blest ?”

It was too much. Roseline sunk on the bosom of her lover, and at that moment

secretly wished to breathe her last sigh, and yield up her spotless life, in those arms which now perhaps for the last time encircled her.

The situation of Roseline caused a general alarm. Walter, frantic with terror, clasped her tenderly to his heart, and called upon her to speak. It was some time before she recovered, and Edwin, who saw the necessity of putting an end to an interview so dangerous and painful, in a voice between jest and earnest, exclaimed, "Indeed, my good friends, I have no relish for seeing such scenes as these performed, particularly when they do so little credit to the performers. These high-wrought feelings may be very fine, but excuse me for saying they are very silly. Recollect, my dear Walter, that our Roseline advances but slowly in her progress towards convalescence; therefore, in her present state of weakness, an interview like this must prove very prejudicial to her recovery."

“Take her away, (cried Walter,) that I may not become a murderer; only before we part, let me hear my pardon pronounced.”

He threw himself at the feet of his weeping mistress, who, giving him her hand, said, with a convulsive sob, “There could be no doubt of pardon where no offence had been committed.”

Edwin availed himself of this moment as the most favourable to withdraw. He took the reluctant hand of his sister, and with a gentle compulsion drew her away, saying, he would not tax his feelings by staying any longer.

Roseline, again, and almost unknowing what she did, grasped the hand of her lover, and, in a voice too low to be perfectly understood, murmured some tender admonitions, which we doubt not were intelligible to the ear of love, but, to an indifferent person,

person, they might as well have been expressed in Arabic.

Till the door shut Walter from her sight, her eyes were fixed immoveably upon his face, with such a look of anguish, as may be easier imagined than described; and, when she could see him no longer, she thought the deprivation of life would have been the greatest blessing heaven could bestow on one so hopeless, and, had it not been for her father's dreadful threat of destroying himself, she would have thrown herself at the Baron's feet, and informed him how little she deserved to be his wife who had bestowed her love upon another.

Edwin accompanied his sister to her apartment, but had too much consideration, too much respect for her sorrows, to break in upon moments sad but precious. Happily however for this amiable unfortunate, she was not long permitted to indulge her heart-breaking reflections in solitude.—

Her mother and sisters requested her presence to consult her taste, and hear her opinion on some of the preparations going forwards.

Sir Philip, from the time he had extorted her unwilling consent, had carefully avoided another private interview, but had taken every opportunity of caressing her in the presence of her friends, frequently making use of various pretences to get the intended bridegroom out, in order to draw off his attention from Roseline, constantly trembling lest she should appeal to his generosity, or disgust him with her coldness.

Prohibited by her father's cruel vow from applying to any one, she had no alternative but to yield to her destiny, and combat her sorrows, unconsoled and unsupported, except by her distracted brother, who was unfortunately nearly as hopeless as herself. Thus environed with misery, thus entangled in the subtle toils of cruelty and oppression,

oppression, she was at times led to think she should be less wretched if her fate were determined, concluding, from the torturing sensation of her present feelings, she could not long support them.

The bustle, hurry, and confusion, which pervaded every department of the castle, afforded none of its inhabitants much time for reflection or conversation. Lady de Morney wished to question her daughter, but was 'afraid of making the attempt.— She found it difficult however to obey the mandate of her husband, which, though unnatural and unreasonable, was absolute; therefore, after some few conflicts with herself, she thought it better not to contend a point of so much consequence.

She saw the internal wretchedness of her daughter with the tenderest regret, and shuddered whenever she remarked her cold and freezing manner as soon as the Baron

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approached

approached to pay her those attentions due from a lover. She took every opportunity of giving her approbation of her conduct, and by a thousand nameless proofs of tenderness shewed a commiserating sympathy, which did not pass unobserved by Roseline, who, though she received these marks of affection in silence, determined to avail herself of her mother's tenderness by endeavouring to interest her in favour of the man to whom she had given her heart.

The dreaded morning came, but it came enveloped in a gloom which exactly corresponded with the feelings, spirits, and prospects, of the mourning bride. The sun arose invisible to mortal sight, as if unwilling to witness a deed his brightest rays could not enliven. Dark lowering clouds threatened to touch the turrets of the castle. The rain descended in torrents. It appeared to the disconsolate Roseline that the very heavens wept in pity to her sorrows; the thought

thought was romantic, but it was consoling.

Melancholy, and even madness itself, are said to have their pleasures, and the most wretched sometimes steal comfort from the delusions of imagination. Happy is it that such resources are found to sweeten the bitter draught so many are compelled to drink!—

Roseline submitted to be dressed as the taste of her attendants chose to direct. She was silent and passive, and made no remarks on the elegance of her attire, or the brilliancy of the ornaments with which she was decorated. When summoned to breakfast she attempted no delay, and on her entrance was met by the Baron, who addressed her in a very tender and respectful speech, as he gallantly led her to her seat. She would have assumed a smile had she been able to command her features. She would have said something, but speech was denied. Indeed, none of the company appeared in a

humour to converse. Lady de Morney was sad and sick at heart, and Sir Philip himself, in the very moment he saw the gratification of his wishes in so fair a train to be realized, felt neither satisfied nor happy.



CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

A MESSAGE arrived from father Anselm to say he was ready, and waiting their pleasure in the chapel of the nunnery. The carriages were instantly ordered to the door. Roseline, more dead than alive, was handed into the first, and followed by her mother and two sisters. The Baron was accompanied by Sir Philip and Edwin in the second. They soon arrived at the chapel, and were met there by the abbess, Madeline, and Agnes de Clifford. Several of the friars and monks also attended. After

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stopping

stopping a few moments to pay and receive the proper compliments, the Baron took the trembling hand of his intended bride, and led her to the altar. Father Anselm opened his book, and began the awful ceremony, when the whole party were thrown into the utmost consternation by the door, which led from the subterranean passage to the castle, being suddenly burst open, and Walter, with a drawn sword in his hand, his eyes flashing fire, followed by Albert, instantly rushed up to the altar, and, calling to father Anselm in a tone of frenzy, bade him desist, or proceed at his peril.

“The hand of Roseline (he cried) is mine, and mine only ! I come to claim my affianced bride, and accursed be the wretch who shall attempt to wrest her from me !”

The Baron sunk down, exclaiming,—
“Again that dreadful spectre !—Save me, save me, from it !”

The

The book dropped from the hands of the venerable priest, and the terrified and astonished Roseline fainted in the arms of her mother, while the countenance of every one assembled was marked with surprise and consternation, but the attitude, the expressive face of Walter, as he stood gazing on the party, caught every eye, and excited universal admiration. His dress was scarlet, richly laced : in his hat he wore a plume of white feathers, fastened by a clasp of diamonds, his tall elegant form and fine-turned limbs presenting a subject for the statuary, which few could copy in a stile that would have done justice to the original.

Roseline for some minutes remained in a state of total insensibility, but the Baron soon recovered sufficient recollection to look around him ; his eyes were again fixed on the prisoner with a look rather of tenderness than displeasure.

“Tell

“ Tell me, youth, (he cried,) whence comest thou?—to whom dost thou belong? Those features are as familiar to my astonished sight as they were once deeply engraved on my heart. Hadst thou worn any other countenance but that of my once-loved Habella, my sword ere now should have taught thee to respect those sacred rites thou hast so rudely interrupted; but that is the shield which still protects thee, and by some invisible influence withholds my arm from punishing thy daring intrusion.”

“ Then hesitate no longer, my lord, to execute your purposed vengeance!—(said Walter, gracefully bending one knee to the ground, and baring his bosom, as if to receive the uplifted sword of the Baron.)—Roseline is mine, and were there ten thousand swords ready to pierce my bosom, I would thus publicly proclaim my right.”

“ How!—what is the meaning of all this? (said the Baron, looking with indignation at the astonished Sir Philip;)—truth appears to dwell

dwell on the tongue of this youthful stranger.—But why have I been thus grossly deceived?—why brought into this sacred place to be made a fool of by a boy and girl?”

“ You must inquire of that same boy, (replied his friend,) of whose very honourable pretensions I never heard till this moment. Why do you hesitate, my lord?—why vent your rage on me, when it would be more justly and properly employed in punishing a madman who has dared to dispute your claim to the hand of my daughter?”

“ His countenance still protects him, (said the Baron.)—Order some of your people to take the youth into safe custody till this matter can be investigated.”

Father Anselm now inquired if he might go on with the ceremony.

“ Not till I have been heard, (cried Walter,) though you tear me piece-meal, shall you proceed !”

Roseline

Roseline had recovered, but she was still surrounded by her female friends. The voice of Walter operated like a charm. She gently raised her eyes to his face, and begged he would be patient: then, addressing her father, entreated he would not permit any one to hurt him: "I, and I alone, (said the generous maid,) ought to suffer. — My dear Walter, (cried she,) contend no longer for me: think not of risking a life which is too precious to be so madly thrown away. Let every circumstance which led to the painful occurrences of this morning be openly and candidly explained, and let us rest our cause on the justice and humanity of the Baron, father Anselm, and Sir Philip de Morney. I wish not to make my appeal before any other tribunal."

The Baron, who now for the first time discovered Albert among the crowd, (for the contest had brought all the inhabitants of the nunnery into the chapel,) started as if he had seen a spectre. He became more
agitated

agitated than before, and requested they might return to the castle, that an investigation of this strange business might instantly take place, for his own heart informed him there was some awful mystery to be explained.

Albert approached him : “ My lord, (said he,) till this moment I have supposed you cruel, unjust, and unfeeling : my heart reproaches me for my injustice. I begin to see through the cloud which has too long enveloped me. I suspect we have been equally deceived,—alike the dupes of artifice and guilt.”

“ Art thou not Albert ? (exclaimed the Baron,)—the confidential servant of the Lady Blanch, and the favourite of her brother ?”

“ I am the same unfortunate person, my lord, (replied Albert ;) and am not only ready to account for my being here, but to give you all the intelligence in my power respecting some very interesting circumstances with

with which till this moment I never supposed you unacquainted. My dear sir, (said he, turning to his agitated master,) endeavour to be more composed :” for the countenance of Walter was too faithful an index to his mind to enable him to conceal the conflicting passions which tortured his bosom, and, while his attention was divided in observing the Baron and Roseline, he seemed sinking beneath his own agonizing emotions.

Father Anselm, the lady abbess, and two bride-maids, were requested to return with the party to the castle. A guard was ordered to take charge of Walter and his servant, but he informed them the order might be countermanded ; for, being a prisoner, he had requested three gentlemen from the castle to attend him, lest he should subject himself to the suspicion of designing to escape.

De Clavering, De Willows, and Camel-ford, were now summoned from the passage, where

where they had impatiently waited to see how this strange and unaccountable business would terminate. This occasioned further surprise to Sir Philip, who restrained his rising displeasure with only desiring them to take charge of the gentleman they had chosen to escort, and to be ready to appear when called upon.

Before Walter left the chapel, he approached the Baron, and presented him his sword. "To you, my lord, (said he,) I am impelled to yield a weapon which never yet was stained with human blood, and at this moment I feel a grateful joy that it was not aimed against your life. Most ardently do I desire to prove myself deserving of your friendship, and worthy of your esteem."

The Baron returned his sword, and requested him to wear it. "You have already obtained your wish, (said he, smiling,) and that I must confess against my inclination; but there is something about you speaks a
language

language I find difficult to explain, and cannot comprehend."

Every countenance was brightened up with hope and expectation at this reply of the Baron, except that of Sir Philip de Morney. Even the cold and frigid father Anselm, who, in his long seclusion from the world, had, as it may naturally be supposed, lost many of those generous and tender feelings which a more unrestrained intercourse with his fellow-creatures would have helped to cherish, seemed animated and enlivened. It was agreed that Walter and his friends, accompanied by Edwin, should return the same way as they had entered, and the rest of the party be conveyed in the carriages.—After proper apologies being made to father Anselm, and some of his brethren, for the unnecessary trouble they had so undesignedly occasioned, they returned to the castle,—with what different feelings than those they carried with them to the chapel I must leave my readers to imagine.

No

No sooner were the party assembled in the drawing-room, than the Baron requested that the young man and his servant might be summoned to give some account of themselves, and explain their motive for their daring and unprecedented proceedings ; at the same time, observing in the countenance of Sir Philip de Morney indignation, resentment, and disappointment, he addressed him in the following words.

“ I should not, Sir Philip, presume to take the liberty I have now done, did I not, from the nature of our intended connexion, consider myself as authorised to act in this castle as if I were in my own. I am afraid some very dark transactions have been carried on which it is necessary should be investigated, and be brought to light. A mysterious cloud hangs over us, which I am impatient to disperse. Woe be to that man who has assisted to deceive me !”

“ If you doubt my honour in what has passed between us, (retorted Sir Philip,) you do

do me injustice, and I shall, at any time and in any place, be ready to meet you upon whatever terms you please. If my daughter has deceived me,—if she has dared to encourage the hopes of an adventurer,—a maniac,—a traitor,—let her remember that her crime will not be her only punishment, nor will the sacrifice of her father's life be a sufficient atonement for [the disgrace and dishonour she has entailed on the name of De Morney.”

Roseline burst into tears, in which she was joined by every one of her female companions, who trembled lest some dreadful catastrophe should close the heart-rending scenes of this eventful morning.

“It may be happy for us both, (said the no-longer haughty Baron, whose complicated feelings had produced an instantaneous revolution among his contending passions,) that at this moment I do not find myself inclined to engage in any farther hostilities, till I am better
better

better satisfied the affront and disappointment were intended for me. If I have been meanly and wilfully deceived, my sword shall revenge me upon those, and those only, who are found guilty, and dearly shall they atone for the injustice they have practised; therefore, till matters are cleared up, I am content to be silent on a subject which, I hesitate not to declare, appears to me inexplicable."

Roseline, who would have given the world to have obtained permission to retire during the awful investigation which was going to take place, dared not make an attempt to withdraw, as she saw by the eyes of her father his rage and indignation were only kept from breaking out by the determined manner and authoritative tone of the Baron, who did not appear in a humour, notwithstanding his language spoke the spirit of peace and candour, to put up with any contradiction. Again he expressed the most restless impatience to be confronted with the parties,

parties, who had so unaccountably deprived him of his young bride, by stopping the marriage-ceremony.

In a few moments the painful suspense was ended by the eager and intrepid entrance of Walter, the three companions of his enterprise, and his humble friend : they were desired to be seated. Walter and Albert, however, continued standing, requesting they might be permitted to do so, till they should be acquitted or condemned. The Baron instantly called upon Albert to perform his promise, and, if he were really the honest man he pretended to be, to step forwards, and without fear or prevarication, before the present party, inform them who it was he acknowledged as his master, and prove the justice of those claims which he had made to the hand of his elected bride, and what were his inducements for preventing a marriage, sanctioned by the lady's own consent, and the unequivocal approbation of her parents."

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“ I am happy, my lord, (replied Albert, in a firm, manly, and unembarrassed, tone of voice,) to be thus generously and publicly called upon. Unpractised in either guilt or deceit, and having nothing to fear from my own self-reproaches, I hail this moment, awful as I own it appears, as by far the happiest of my life. But, before we proceed any farther in this important business, I must entreat your lordship to perform an act of tender and atoning justice, for which I trust you will find an approving advocate in your own heart, and require little farther testimony than the receipt carried in a countenance which you have already confessed has stamped its validity upon every tender feeling of your soul.

“ My dear, dear sir, (continued he, addressing himself to the trembling Walter,) throw yourself at the feet of the noble Baron ; for, as sure as you now live to claim that distinguished honour, you are his son, his only lawful heir !—the darling offspring

of the Lady Isabella Fitzosbourne, who, to give you life, yielded up her own."

Walter in an instant was at the feet of the Baron, and in another the interested and astonished party saw them locked in each other's arms, at the same moment the agitated Roseline sunk into those of her mother. In a little time every one became more composed, and the Baron, resolutely struggling to acquire a greater degree of firmness in order to obtain farther information, exclaimed, in a tone of voice that evinced the nature of his feelings, "You are, you must be my son!—Nature, at first sight of you, asserted her just, her powerful claims: yes, you are the precious gift of my fainted Isabella,—the only pledge of a love that was pure and gentle as her own heart and mind! but how, where, by what cruel policy and unfeeling hand have you thus long been concealed from my sight?—how prevented from enjoying the advantages of your birth-right,

right, while I was tortured with the belief that death had robbed me of my son ?”

“ Of all these matters, my lord, Albert can fully inform you, (said Walter.) He is much better able to explain them than I can possibly be, who till this hour did not know I should ever be folded in a father’s arms ; yet to me Albert has been a father, a friend, and a guardian. For my sake he has voluntarily buried himself for years in the gloomy and narrow confines of a dungeon ; for my sake suffered the punishment of the most atrocious offender without being guilty of a single crime. If you therefore condescend to love and acknowledge me for his son, you will feel for him the affection of a brother. To you, my lord, I am indebted for life,—to this, my second father, I owe its preservation.”

“ Generous man ! (cried the enraptured Baron, who was charmed at hearing the noble sentiments of his son,) come to my arms, and command my power to serve you !”

Albert would have knelt at his feet, but was prevented by a warm embrace from putting his design in execution. Walter was now seated by the side of his happy father, who, observing that his eye wandered in search of something, with anxious tenderness, soon guessed the cause, and, instantly rising from his chair, took his hand, and led him to the weeping Roseline, who, smiling through her tears, instantly proved how warmly she participated in his happiness. Walter, though the acknowledged son of Baron Fitzosbourne, was still the son of nature: he sunk at her feet, and in the unadulterated language of rapture and affection, exclaimed,—“For a moment like this, who is there would not suffer years of anguish! Look down, my gentle friend, my benefactress and protecting angel,—my first, my last, and only love, and let me in your smiles find a confirmation of my bliss! Let them convince me that all I see and hear is real; for I am almost tempted to think it must be the effects of enchantment, or the delusions of a distempered imagination.”

Roseline,

Roseline, no longer awed by the presence of her father, no longer able to conceal the joy which revelled in her bosom, gave him her hand, which he instantly conveyed to his lips. Albert, who carefully watched every change in the countenance of his beloved master, trembled for the consequence of such new and high-wrought feelings, lest they should be attended with danger to a mind which had so recently been sunk in a state of the lowest dejection. With the approbation of the party, who saw the necessity of the design, he prevailed upon him to retire for a few minutes, in order to acquire sufficient fortitude to hear his own story recited with composure. This request being seconded by his father and Roseline, he immediately complied, leaving the company so much charmed with the whole of his behaviour, through the interesting scene we have described, and so captivated with his figure, good sense, and sweetness of manners, that surprise was lost in admiration. As soon as the two friends had withdrawn, (for, if ever

any one deserved the name of friend, that title belonged to the worthy Albert,) Sir Philip de Morney approached the Baron, and with some little embarrassment congratulated him on the wonderful discovery which had so recently and unexpectedly taken place.—He then entered on his own defence, with the candour and ease of one, who, if he had erred, it proceeded from ignorance.

“ That I have undesignedly been made an agent in the diabolical injustice practised against your son, by keeping him confined in this castle, I beg your lordship’s pardon, and entreat you would use your influence to procure the forgiveness of him whom I have innocently injured. He was brought to this place under a fictitious name, and, with the false pretence of being at times deranged in his intellects, I was told he was the illegitimate offspring of a person inimical to the plans of government, and easily wrought upon by his associates to enter into any scheme which the enemies of his country might

might throw in his way ; at the same time it was asserted that he was particularly disliked by a great person high in office. All that was required of me was to keep him and his servant in close confinement,—to suffer no one to see or converse with them, and to convey no letters nor messages beyond the walls of the castle. This request came from one with whom I had lived in habits of intimacy, and whom I looked upon as a respectable character. He had previously obtained permission of the noble owner of the castle for the use of its dungeons, but who, as well as myself, must have been led into the practice of so glaring a piece of tyranny by the designs and misrepresentations of those whose interest led them to keep your lordship in ignorance of your son's being alive. In justice I ought to inform you, that I was ordered to supply them liberally with every necessary accommodation the nature of their situation would admit, and was not restricted, if I found them quiet and submissive, from allowing them some occasional indulgences. I take

shame to myself when I own, that, after I had seen them safely lodged in their dungeon, and had forbidden any one attempting to go near or hold conversation with them, I never visited them more than once, concluding they were two dangerous and worthless people, who were receiving the reward of their base actions, and contenting myself with only making such inquiries as the duties of my situation imposed. Indeed I thought very little about them, and waited with composure for the farther explanation promised by my friend, when we met to settle the accounts for their board, &c. How the youthful prisoner became acquainted with my daughter, or by what means he obtained an introduction to her, I am to this moment totally ignorant."

"If it can be as well accounted for (said father Anselm) who for some time had remained silent with surprise,) as you have accounted for the part you were prevailed upon to act, I think the most rigid judge will find but little to condemn."

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“I have no fears (replied the Baron) but their actions will stand quite as clear; the sparkling eyes of my affianced bride are at this moment telling tales of their own beguiling influence, and testifying by their intelligent language that I am right in my conjectures. No wonder, as she conquered the father, she should have wounded, and rendered the son doubly a captive: but here comes the fortunate culprit. Let us hear his defence before we venture to pronounce whether he is entitled to forgiveness and an honourable acquittal, or merits condemnation for daring to fall in love while sentenced to languish in a dungeon.”

Roseline, having now shaken off that languor and despondency which for so many days had depressed the generous and active feelings of the gentlest of human minds, impelled by justice and the unbounded affection she had long felt for Walter, exclaimed, “If every virtue merits reward, if every good and engaging quality be entitled to happiness,

ness, your son, my lord, will be the happiest of men ; for, to the long list of virtues he inherits from his noble ancestors, you will find added all the bounteous gifts which nature could bestow on her most distinguished favourite."

This artless eulogium was not made without a blush, and the rose which blossomed on her cheek gave to her face an expression which, in the eyes of the Baron, exceeded that of the most perfect beauty. Walter, followed by Albert, now returned into the room.

"Come here, young man, (said his father, in a tone of gratified affection,) come and prove yourself worthy of the character I have heard given of you by a very lovely historian. Sit down by me, and endeavour to keep your mind free from agitation, and your spirits composed, while our friend Albert gives us the promised narration, which is to establish your claim to my name as firmly as your merits

merits and conduct have already done to my regard ; for, though you played me a sly and mortifying trick before I had the happiness of knowing you, I find in myself little inclination to resent it. Take notice, however, that perhaps I shall not be quite so favourably inclined to excuse any deviations in future, should a certain young lady be in the case." This was spoken in a tone that proved the Baron was far from being dissatisfied at having found a rival, so long as he had regained a son.

General congratulations now took place, and the merry, good-humoured Hugh Camelford, after jumping up and cutting a few capers in the true stile of Cambrian hilarity, declared he could dance a fandango with his cranmother; or the toctor, round the topmost pattlements of Bungay Castle, for he never lived a happier moment since he was born. Every eye spoke the same language, and De-Clavering said, though he dreaded the oyster-shell devilifications of a woman's

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mind,

mind, he had a pretty widow in his eye, whom he should entreat to take care of him for life. Sir Philip, with a smile, whispered Lady de Morney, telling her, he thought after all women catered the best for themselves in the choice of their husbands: for, prejudice out of the question, the Baron's son was certainly the finest young man he had ever seen.—As all the party were impatient to hear the tale Albert had to communicate, he was requested to begin, which he did in the following manner.



CHAP.

CHAP. V.

“YOU cannot but recollect, my lord,
 (addressing himself to the Baron,)
 that, when you married the Lady Blanch,
 I came into your family. I had been
 brought up in her father’s house, and from
 a boy was appointed to attend her person,
 no one being allowed to command or em-
 ploy me without her permission. When all
 preliminaries were settled for your marriage
 with my lady, I was informed that I was still
 to have the honour of attending her; a fa-
 vour so great, and voluntarily conferred,
 rendered

rendered me not a little vain. You soon after married, and I became a resident in your family : my lady still distinguishing me with her approbation, made me grateful and happy, and, though I was frequently reproached by my fellow-servants, with ill-humour and acrimony, for being so great a favourite, I endeavoured all in my power to convince them, I wished not to deprive them of any advantages they had enjoyed before I came among them, and this in a little time made them more reconciled and obliging.

My dear young master was then in his infancy, and my place not being one of the busiest, I had many hours of leisure, which I was allowed to dispose of as suited my inclination : these hours I chiefly spent in the nursery, and, being remarkably fond of children, I soon became so strongly attached to the young lord, that I often regretted the necessity of leaving him, which I was sometimes obliged to do for weeks and months together, either when your lordship took my
lady

lady to town, paid visits to your friends, or went to any other of your estates ; and once, if you recollect, you were absent a long time, when you carried my lady to Montpellier, whose declining health led you to adopt this plan for her recovery, which the physicians said would perfectly restore that bloom a slow and nervous fever had stolen from her, and alarmed every friend who saw the ravages sickness had made in a countenance formed to captivate.— Ah ! that unfortunate excursion !—I have wished with an aching heart a thousand and a thousand times it had never been made.

During our absence my lady lost her fever, and gave birth to a son, who very soon engrossed so much of her time and affection, that your lordship had just reason to complain of the change it produced. There was another change which you did not so soon discover.

During our residence among a parcel of jabbering foreigners, my lady learned to de-
spise

spise the blessed manners and customs of her native country, and all those feelings which once made her so charming. We must eat, drink, sleep, dress, and do every thing after the French fashion. I was often reprov'd for retaining more than any of my fellow-servants my clumsy English manners. She frequently expressed her satisfaction that her son first saw the light on the Gallic shore, where, if she could have persuaded your lordship, she would have continued to reside.

After an absence of eighteen months, which appeared to me the length of as many years, we returned to England, and found my young lord just recovered from the small-pox, of a very bad sort, which had so much altered him, that my lady believed, or rather affected to believe, that your son had been changed during our absence, or that he might have died, and some designing artful people had impos'd their own offspring upon you, to usurp his rights, and rob her little
darling

darling of his title and estate. The boy she found in your castle could not be the sweet creature she left :—*he* was beautiful and finely formed ;—*this* was ugly to a degree, robust, clumsy, and half an idiot.

I know not what arts were used to make your lordship give any credit to so fallacious and improbable a tale ; but I observed, with unfeigned regret, from that time your affection was continually decreasing, till at last your son was seldom admitted to your presence, and never indulged with those fond caresses which, previous to your departure from England, were frequently and tenderly repeated. He was generally dismissed with the epithets of beggar's brat, foundling, and idiot."

" I feel deep contrition for yielding belief to such infernal tales, (said the Baron,)—for being so long the dupe and tool of a designing malicious woman, and neglecting the son of the most amiable and best of wives.

Ah !

Ah ! my Isabella ! if you are permitted to look down on this lower world,—if you are acquainted with the conduct of him to whom you entrusted your virgin-heart, and made the chosen lord of your destiny, how must you despise and detest the mean, the forgetful wretch, who deserted the sacred, the precious charge you so tenderly committed to his care ! May my future penitence atone for the cruelty of my past conduct, and my fainted Isabella intercede with her Creator for pardon and forgiveness ! Then may Fitzosbourne hope her spirit will in the grave find a place of rest. No wonder my crimes have robbed her even of that asylum.”

The tears of remorse stole down the Baron's cheeks, and he gave Walter a look of tender regret, that said as much as volumes could have done.

“ I know to what your lordship alludes, (said Walter,) and I am happy that it is in my power to remove a tormenting delusion from
from

from your mind, which, all circumstances considered, I cannot be surprised, made so forcible an impression on it. The striking likeness which I bear to my ever-regretted mother had often been remarked to me by Albert, and was undoubtedly designed to be the means of restoring me a father."

Every one being impatient to hear the remainder of the prisoner's story, the explanation was deferred, and Albert went on.

"Before my young lord had recovered his former complexion, or his features began to reassume some traits of what they had been, till attacked and disguised by that baneful distemper, so often the grave of beauty,—the enemy of love, I was one day summoned into my lady's dressing-room. After desiring me to shut the door, and take care our conversation was not overheard, she bade me sit down; I obeyed reluctantly, as I never before had been allowed the honour of sitting in her presence. She then inquired if
I were

I were in reality as much attached to her as I had frequently pretended to be, and whether, if she should have occasion to place a confidence in me, and require my assistance, she might trust to my fidelity?

“ I assured her she might command my services to the utmost of my power, as I must be the most insensible and ungrateful of men not to be ready to yield my life, if necessary, for so generous and kind a benefactress.”

“ As to your life, my good Albert, (cried her ladyship, rising, and putting her purse and picture into my hand, which she compelled me to take,) I hope that will long be preserved to do me service. The request I shall make will neither involve you in difficulties nor danger; and if you faithfully perform what will be asked of you, rely upon my word, it will not only free you from labour and servitude, but be a certain means of procuring you a comfortable independence for the rest of your life,—an income that will enable you

you to marry the woman you love, with whom you may live to see yourself surrounded with a numerous offspring. (The picture was drawn in the most flattering colours,—the back ground was not quite so pleasing.)—But you must, to obtain my good opinion, and secure to yourself those enviable comforts, (continued her ladyship,) unconditionally and without knowing the nature of the service required of you, take a solemn and sacred oath never to betray, by thought, word, or deed, the confidence reposed in you. I will give you three days to consider of my proposal, and at the end of that time shall expect your answer.”

“I was now ordered to withdraw, which I immediately did, in a state of mind not to be imagined. What could my lady mean?—what was the business in which I was to be employed that demanded the solemn prelude of an oath? Oaths were sacred things; they were not to be trifled with, and were thought necessary only on the most
important

important occasions. I next recollected that I had known my lady from a child : she had ever been my friend, had frequently given me good advice, and was religious, generous, and charitable. It could not therefore be any wicked or unjust action she wanted me to accomplish ; *that* was contrary to her nature. What then had I to fear from taking an oath which could do no one any harm, and might make my fortune ? Independence was promised me. I was young, sanguine, and aspiring, yet I had never dared to hope being placed in a situation above that I at present enjoyed. The lure was thrown out by a hand I could not resist, and I was caught by the tempting bait, which I swallowed to the destruction of my own peace."

" But, by your fortunately having done so, (exclaimed Walter,) my life was repeatedly preserved to enjoy the present moment of exquisite happiness and soul-enlivening hope."—He fixed his eyes tenderly on the blushing

blushing Roseline, as he uttered this affecting exclamation.

“ When the appointed time was expired, (continued Albert,) I was admitted to a second conference with my lady, and without making any terms, being, as I thought, well assured I might safely rely on her virtue and rectitude as trust to her generosity, I took the oath, which was tendered to me by father Paul, her confessor and domestic chaplain, to obey such orders as were given me with secrecy and fidelity, for which I was to receive in quarterly payments eighty pounds a year, and to have clothes, board, and every other necessary, allowed me.— Father Paul bore the character of a just and pious man; therefore, had I retained any reluctance, receiving the oath from so sacred and important a personage would have rendered any doubts an unpardonable offence against our holy church. In compliance with my earnest request to be informed what was expected to be done by me, and when I was
to

to enter on my task, father Paul himself, after some little hesitation, opened the business.

“ Her ladyship (he said) was convinced, and he was of the same opinion, that the child, (meaning my young lord,) which passed for the son of the worthy and unsuspecting Baron, was in all probability the spurious offspring of some low-born peasant, the fruit of an illicit and illegal amour, imposed upon the noble family, for base and artful purposes, by some designing wretch, after the death of the lawful heir, which, by some very wonderful means, has so far been brought to light as to confirm the fact. This child was so totally different from that left in England, it could not possibly be the same. He was beautiful, sensible, lively, and active ; this was an ugly brat, dull, and stupid, and as much the child of King Solomon as of the Baron.—It was become necessary for the honour and comfort of the family to send it away : it was to be removed
into

into some distant and healthy county for change of air, and placed with a country woman to be nursed. After he had been absent a few months, I was to withdraw myself from the Baron's service, take the boy from his ignorant nurse, and accompany him to whatever place I should be directed. Till he came to a certain age, I was to have the occasional assistance of a female in rearing him up, and was desired to do all I could for the poor stupid creature, who, to be sure, in the eyes of impartial justice, had not yet been guilty of a crime; but, to prevent his being so, by monopolizing the rights of another, this plan was adopted.

“I was next commanded never to presume to give the most distant hint either to himself or any one else, that he had ever been suspected, or even thought of consequence,—never to mention the name of Fitzosbourne to him, or to say that he or myself had resided in the family. When he arrived at the age of fifteen, I might, if I were so incli-

ned, give up my task, and should have proper security for receiving my salary during the rest of my life, even if the boy should luckily die before the age fixed upon to release me from my engagements. If I chose the trouble, I might teach him to read and write ; but it was a matter of little consequence :—the less such people knew, the better.—ignorance to them was happiness, and knowledge only a burthen, of which it was better not to be possessed.

“ I had been unwarily drawn into the snare from which I now wanted judgment, courage, and resolution, to disentangle myself. The influence and unbounded power my lady ever held over me, — her consequence, and my humble station, arose to my terrified imagination, and I dared not venture to expostulate against a plan sanctioned by the Lady Blanch, and approved by father Paul, with whom it was equally dangerous to contend.

“ Of

“Of the identity of the young lord I never cherished a doubt ; and, if I had, the restoration of his sweet features to their former beauty and expression, which was now beginning to take place, would have banished them as soon as they arose ; yet the fear of offending kept me silent : the oath I had taken hung over me with terror ;—it was a heavy weight upon my spirits ;—every struggle I made with conscience was over-ruled by worldly motives. I would not be perjured, but I consented to be ten times worse. Alas ! I little suspected, when I took that sacred, yet unhallowed oath, that I was sentencing myself and a helpless innocent to years of hopeless imprisonment,—to a kind of living death, and burthening my conscience with the heavy crime of being the vile agent in assisting to rob the best, the most amiable of all God’s creatures of his title, a noble estate, and even of that freedom which the poorest of his father’s vassals enjoyed.”

G 2

“ Dear

“ Dear Albert, (cried Walter,) do not abuse yourself so unjustly : represent not your actions in colours that do not belong to them. If I suffered, you did the same ; the barbarous hands which robbed me of liberty, and the all-cheering light of heaven, deprived you also of your’s. Had it not been for your unremitting and watchful care, your more than parental tenderness, I had long ere now been numbered with the dead, and my existence and injuries lost in eternal oblivion.”

“ My noble boy, (exclaimed the Baron,) there spoke the soul of your angelic mother ! Just so would she have shewn her grateful sense of benefits received.—Go on, my friend, regard not the feelings you excite ; they are due to the sufferings of this injured youth, and to the virtues of his generous guardian and protector.”

Albert proceeded.—“ A plan so deeply laid and artfully contrived, supported by such authority and power, succeeded but too well.

I was,

I was, in due time, form, and order, dismissed from your lordship's castle, and very soon the precious charge was delivered into the hands of the villain who had been aiding and abetting his ruin ; but the degrading, self-reproving feelings, the horrid conflicts I endured, in the moment when the innocent victim ran joyfully into the arms of the Judas who had betrayed him, shouting, jumping, and skipping with pleasure, to think I was come to live with him, and be his nurse, were such as I would not have encountered for ten thousand worlds, could I have foretold the scorpion stings with which I found them armed at all points. It was judged necessary that we should speedily remove from the house of the poor, ignorant woman to whom my young lord had been entrusted, and under whose fostering and maternal care he had entirely recovered his looks, and found more happiness than in the habitation of greatness. I took care she should not go unrewarded for her kindness,

and received at the expected time my instructions for our removal.

“ After a long and tiresome journey, we arrived at an old ruined castle, on the borders of —, and there I found a woman, who was appointed to assist me in the care of my important charge. We had a small, gloomy, and inconvenient apartment appropriated to our use ; our table was tolerably well supplied : we had plenty of what the country afforded, were never denied any addition I requested should be made to our wardrobe, and at times books and toys were sent unsolicited ; my salary was likewise punctually remitted me.

“ Here we lingered away some time, and were afterwards removed to two places before we were brought hither, owing I suppose to some circumstance that rendered our removal necessary, for the better secreting of our persons. Long before the time expired in which my engagement was to end, and I should

should be authorised to demand my freedom and continued reward, I found myself so strongly attached to my young lord, felt such pity for his situation, and such corroding regret at having lent my assistance to his cruel persecutors, I could not support the most distant idea of forsaking him, and would have suffered torture rather than have left him in a state so desolate and unprotected.

“ I hinted in my letters, that, if any attempts were made to separate me from my beloved charge, I should consider the oath which had hitherto kept me faithful to their secret as no longer binding. I heard by chance of the death of Lady Blanch, but never till very lately that she had lost her son. I for some months cherished hopes that her death would procure our liberty, and release me from my oath, but I was soon given to understand, that to her brother she had discovered the secret; that, in future, our remittances were to be sent by his order, and we were to be guided by his direction.

“ Finding things thus settled and arranged, after we had lived so many years in confinement, I concluded that the whole plan had been contrived and executed with your lordship’s consent, and no longer doubted but it was your wish that the son of the Lady Blanch should inherit your titles and estates.”

“ Good God ! (exclaimed the Baron,) how awful and mysterious are thy dealings with us erring mortals ! I was told, and supposed the tale was true, that my poor boy died suddenly, in a few months after he was sent from the castle, on the pretence that change of air was necessary. I gave orders for his interment in our family-vault, went into mourning, and knew not till this ever blessed day that a son of mine existed.— Unhappy, mistaken, guilty Blanch !— the untimely fate of thy darling boy is now fully and solemnly accounted for ! It was doubtless the just judgment of heaven for thy unpardonable crimes in depriving the son of my

my Isabella first of his father's love, and then of his protection. The agonies of thy dying moments are now explained : they were the direful effects of unavailing contrition ; for, when thou wouldst have relieved thy mind of its heavy burthen, speech was denied thee : I hope thy anguish, in those moments of terror, have in part atoned for thy unheard of cruelty.

“ Father Paul has found a shelter in the grave from my resentment ; but the man, I will not call him brother, who must have been tempted to take an active part in this iniquitous business, in the hopes of obtaining some of my fortune for his children, still living to feel my anger. What could induce one of his exalted rank to persecute and rob the innocent, if from his sufferings and seclusion he had not expected to reap considerable benefit !”

“ Perhaps the fear of punishment and exposure might prompt them to continue the deception, (said Albert ;) what occasioned

sioned our removal to this castle I could never learn ; it was sudden, and conducted with secrecy and caution, for we were guarded as if we had been prisoners of state, owing, I presume, to some attack being made, or meditated, against the castle we left ; but, whatever was the cause, we had reason to be thankful for the change it produced, as we had more liberty, and better accommodation, than we had experienced in any other prison."

" I shall ever reproach myself, (said Sir Philip,) for having been led into an act of such unpardonable oppression, for which I can never stand excused to my own heart. I trusted too implicitly to the account which was given me, not doubting the honour or veracity of the parties concerned. I must now entreat, the worthy narrator would proceed with his story, for I own I am very impatient to know how the son of my friend obtained an introduction to my daughter."

" I

“ I trust, my father and indulgent friends will excuse my absence, (said Roseline,) during a recital, that, in my present agitated state of mind, would be too much for me to support.”

“ No, no, no !” was echoed from every part of the room. Walter, rising, and seating himself by the side of Roseline, whispered something in her ear that instantly reconciled her to a compliance with the general request of the company.

Albert then proceeded, and gave an account of their first interesting interview, and of the dangerous state to which long confinement and a slow fever had reduced his master. He dwelt with delight on the tender attentions of the charming Roseline to the poor, forlorn, helpless, and dying prisoner ; described her unremitting care, and mentioned with what joy he marked their growing affection, which was soon visible to all the parties but those most interested.—

The friendship of Edwin was not forgotten, nor were the polite and sisterly attentions of the gentle Madeline passed over in silence. Nothing was omitted in the narrative but the Baron's fright in the subterranean passage, and that for reasons which will hereafter appear, he dared not venture to explain.

“Your alarm, my lord, (continued Albert,) on the night the ball was given by Sir Philip de Morney, and which occasioned so much bustle and confusion, originated from a cause more natural than you, misled by terror, could suppose. To explain things in their proper order, we must go back to the day previous to that of the ball.

“Miss De Morney and her brother had informed my master of what was intended; in consequence of this intelligence, he became more restless and wretched than I had ever seen him, and felt the miseries of his situation so severely, that I trembled for the consequence so irritable a state of mind might produce.

produce on a constitution sufficiently injured already by the unsparing rigours of oppression and confinement. I therefore, without giving him a hint of my intention, formed a plan in my own mind to relieve his sufferings, little suspecting the surprising and happy effects of which it would be productive, or once supposing, that, in his successful rival, I should see Baron Fitzosbourne.—Never was I so puzzled as in the moment I made that discovery, to conceal the feelings by which it was attended, from giving any alarm to those which had already harassed and half destroyed my dear master.

Without much difficulty I prevailed on Mr. De Morney to procure me two female dresses, telling him for what purpose they were intended. He was at first astonished at the singularity of my request; but, finding no ill consequences likely to attend it, readily complied, and with the assistance of his sister the matter was easily accomplished.

“We

“ We helped each other in putting on female attire as well as we could, and took as much care as possible to make such an appearance as was not likely to attract attention. At the time appointed we sallied forth in our female habiliments, slipped through some of the forsaken apartments, and joined without any suspicion a vast number of people who had obtained permission to witness the festival, and see the company dance.

“ The eyes of my young lord were feasted by beholding the beloved object who engrossed his every thought, and constituted his every wish, exhibit her elegant person in the mazy windings of the dance, which till now he had never seen. With a kind of saddened delight, he was soon convinced, that, though her person was engaged, her heart appeared to have no share in the pleasure which was legibly depicted on the countenance of her youthful companions ; but, on that which his eyes alone delighted to

to mark, he saw a silent uncomplaining sadness, which, at the time it wounded, cheered and revived his soul with the sweet hope that, had he been present, had he been her envied partner, no sadness had clouded her brow,—no regret found entrance to her bosom.

“She frequently withdrew her eyes from the company to fix them on the humble crowd, in which she concluded her lover was numbered. He likewise felt his spirits relieved by the coldness and indifference with which he saw she received every flattering attention that was paid her.—When he had sufficiently satisfied his curiosity, and I observed he was weary of being incommoded by the number of people which continued to increase, I whispered him that I thought it time to retire, while the coast was clear, and we could steal away undiscovered.

“He desired me to go first, saying he would follow me in a few moments. I instantly

stantly obeyed. My master, by taking a wrong turn, was passing through your lordship's bedchamber as you entered it. He saw it was his rival, and, in the instantaneous indignation of the moment, forgot everything but the resentment which was rankling in his bosom.—You perceived him,—looked alarmed, and trembled: he frowned, and shook his head, while the face on which you gazed with terror was flushed with passion.

“ On seeing you fall, unable to account for the cause, and fearful of being discovered, he hurried out of the room, and hastened to inform me of what had happened. — Hearing a vast bustle, I instantly disrobed my master of his female attire, having already gotten rid of my own disguise? — I was next day informed by Mr De Morney that your lordship had been alarmed by something in your own room, and was much indisposed. I soon collected sufficient proof to be assured that it was the appearance of your son.

son which had occasioned this confusion, and imparted enough of my sentiments to make myself understood. From that moment, having no alternative, no other method to adopt, in order to bring about a discovery, we agreed to enter the chapel, and these gentlemen, at the request of their friend, hesitated not to be of the party."

To confirm more fully, and to remove every doubt from the mind of the Baron, Albert produced many of the clothes and trinkets which had been sent by the Lady Blanch. The mark of a bunch of currants on the arm of Walter, with which he was born, and which had been occasioned by one of nature's strongest freaks, was perfectly recollected by the Baron, and was a fact not to be controverted.

So many corroborating and convincing testimonies of his identity would have banished doubt, had any doubt remained; but truth and nature were too prevailing to be disputed; the countenance of Walter was,
unsupported

unsupported with farther evidence, sufficient to prove him the son of the Lady Isabella.

This narrative contained so many interesting circumstances, cold and unfeeling must have been the heart which could have heard it with disbelief or indifference: no such heart was enshrined in the bosom of the delighted audience; every eye readily paid the tribute of a tear. The conduct of Roseline and her brother was generally applauded and admired; all were eager to praise, and De Clavering slyly observed, that, if any young lady should fall in his way who had a mind to study the use of herbs, he should conclude she had something more in her head than a wish to learn physic or botany.

“Perhaps ’tis a sign of luf, (said Camel-ford,) when people pegin to study potany, and that is the reason De Willows thinks so much apout it himself; for I heard him in his sleep call out, that he must die, unless
some

some palm could be discovered to heal the wound in his heart, which was as pig as a parn door."

De Willows called him an incorrigible miscreant for betraying the secrets he pilfered from his friend, and vowed to be revenged in his own way. This little fally gave an enlivening turn to the conversation, but it was not possible that a party, circumstanced as the present, should be able to converse on any subject but that in which every heart was interested : it had even bereaved father Anselm and the abbess of many tears.

Sir Philip de Morney avowed that the gentle and benevolent virtues of his children made him blush at the failure of them in himself. The Baron still shed tears, but they were tears more calculated to provoke envy than excite compassion. He embraced his son a₂ wa and again, led him to Roseline, and entreated she would make the youth her captive for life, and bestow on him
the

the only treasure which could reward him for his long confinement and uncomplaining fortitude. He called upon Sir Philip to accept him for a brother instead of a son, saying, as he should now certainly never think of marrying again, the settlements, with a few alterations, might stand as they did. This proposal was too agreeable to meet with any opposition. Upon Albert the Baron proposed settling an annuity that would enable him to live in a style equal to that of the most respectable country gentleman; but this good man instantly declined accepting the generous offer, declaring, that if they compelled him to leave his dear young lord, and deprived him of the pleasure of attending him, life would lose its value, and he should pine away the remainder of his days in discontent and misery, though he were possessed of the most unbounded affluence.

“ And I, (said Walter,) though blessed with my gentle and lovely Roseline, should appear

appear despicable in her eyes, and contemptible in my own, could I ever consent that my preserver, friend, and preceptor, should live under any roof but mine. I hope and trust he will permit me to repay to his declining age the mighty debt I owe him for his tender care, his unceasing attentions to my helpless and persecuted youth."

Albert burst into tears, and, suddenly throwing himself at the feet of Walter, found, in the eager and cordial embrace with which he raised him, an ample reward for his long tried fidelity.

Edeliza, Bertha, and their youthful companions, were no longer able to confine their joy in silence. Bertha crept to the side of Walter, and looked at him with an expression of countenance so good humoured and arch, that he took her on his knee, and inquired if she would give him leave to be her brother.

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“That I will! (said she.)—You are so tall and handsome, and by seeing you I have found why my sister Roseline shed so many tears, had so many fainting fits, and went about without singing the pretty songs she used to do;—it was all owing to you;—therefore you must be very good, and very entertaining, to make her love you better than she does Edeliza, brother Edwin, or myself.”

Lady de Morney, father Anselm, the abbess, Madeline, and Agnes de Clifford, were severally introduced. The abbess, as she expressed her approbation of her niece's lover, told her sister that she saw in his animated and expressive countenance a likeness of her regretted Henry. De Clavering and the rest were not silent. Never can there be found a happier party than were at that time assembled in Bungay-castle. The gloom, which had so long enveloped them, disappeared with every threatening cloud, and was succeeded by the brightest sunshine.

Various

Various reports were in rapid circulation respecting the circumstances which had so wonderfully concurred to promote and secure the happiness of Walter and Roseline; and, while some were pitying, others blaming the bride that should have been, the parties themselves were congratulating each other on account of that very disappointment which had been productive of joy as great as it was unexpected.

Roseline, eager to disrobe herself of her bridal ornaments, which, in spite of herself, carried her reflections back to the agonizing conflicts she had endured when putting them on, retired with her young friends, and then in the fulness of heart, as she embraced them with delight, unmixed with self-reproach or doubt, informed them of her long and tender attachment to the poor, helpless, and unknown prisoner.

Edeliza declared he was almost as handsome as De Willows. "But not half so merry

merry and good humoured as Mr. Camelford, (said Bertha ;) but I will try to make him romp with me, and then perhaps I shall like him as well."

Roseline smiled with complacency at her sister's artless observations, in which she read the sentiments of hearts which had not yet learned the art of concealing what they felt, and which already yielded to the influence of the same blind god who had conducted her through such varying scenes of hope, despair, and misery, to a prospect of the most enviable happiness.

The whole company were invited to spend the remainder of the day at the Castle, notwithstanding the purpose for which they came had been defeated. Father Anselm, who, though a very pious and rigid Catholic, had no objection to good living, very readily accepted the invitation. The doors of the Castle were ordered to be thrown open ; every one that chose was permitted
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to partake of the hospitality and good cheer, and, though the company were disappointed of being at a wedding, it would have been impossible for an indifferent spectator to imagine any matter of such consequence could have happened, as mirth, pleasure, and satisfaction, revelled in every eye, and every countenance was drest in the serene and placid smiles of joy and contentment.

Roseline was closeted half an hour with her mother and aunt; she received their congratulations and caresses with that pure delight which ever attends the heart when duty and affection are united. Lady de Morney could not withhold her praises; yet once or twice gently adverted to the dangers which might have arisen from the duplicity of her conduct in concealing an attachment of so much importance to her future peace, had not the holy virgin condescended to watch and guard her. The abbess bestowed her most pious benediction on her lovely niece, who, she pronounced,

had acted under the influence of her guardian faint, and was entitled to the ample reward which appeared to wait her acceptance.



CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

WHEN the party met at dinner, the simple elegance of Roseline's engaging figure, divested of those ornaments which a few hours before had been so lavishly put on by the fingers of taste, appeared far more captivating : her eyes were illumined with an expression of joy and satisfaction to which they had long been strangers ; the change conveyed a train of the most enchanting sensations to the heart of her admiring lover, and did not pass unobserved by her friends. To Sir Philip

they carried a silent reproach for having so long robbed them of their lustre.

Roseline was seated between the Baron and his son, and, though this was the first time Walter had ever dined with so large a party, or witnessed the comforts of a plentiful table, laden with the rarities of art and nature, he was neither awkward nor embarrassed ; for his friend Albert, to fill up the heavy hours as they slowly crept away during their long and tedious imprisonment, had described to him the manners and customs of the world, among all ranks of people, with the utmost accuracy and care, and by these means prepared him for scenes which must otherwise have astonished, and in many instances alarmed, him.

The good Albert was placed between De Clavering and De Willows, who took this opportunity of shewing him their most flattering attention, and, in consequence, he was encouraged to hold a very respectable part
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in the conversation. As he had before given undeniable proofs of the goodness of his heart, he now unfolded to the company the excellence of his understanding, and convinced them, that, if the prisoner had been educated amidst the bustle of the world, he could not have found a better preceptor as to sound judgment and useful knowledge. — Thus honoured and happy, he found in part a reward for the integrity and humanity of his conduct, while the approving eye of his grateful master spoke a language which conveyed a joy to his heart that is rarely felt, and cannot be defined.

Edwin and De Willows paid every attention to their fair enslavers, no longer fearing the penetrating eyes of the governor, who was too much taken up with the *éclaircissement* of the morning to suspect any other lovers were present.

After the company rose from table, at the Baron's particular request, they went to look

into those dreary apartments to which the prisoner had been consigned at his first coming to the castle. Edwin produced the key of the trap-door, and conducted them down the same stairs which he and his trembling companions had descended when they were alarmed by the unusual noises they heard in the lower part of the castle. Every minute circumstance was interesting to the company; but to the Baron they were connected with a tale that awakened every feeling of his heart. Few therefore can be at a loss to guess his sensations when he entered the cold, gloomy, and unwholesome dungeon in which this darling son, the child of his Isabella, had lingered so many months, and was told by Albert, that it was far more comfortable and commodious than the one he had been inclosed in many long and tedious years.

The Baron shuddered with horror, sat down on the humble and uneasy couch which had been Walter's only bed, during a long
and

and dangerous indisposition, and again called upon Albert to describe his first interview with Roseline ; the tale was again repeated, and lost none of its effect by repetition.— Walter, the tear trembling in his eye as it was fondly bent on Roseline, grasped her hand, and poured out the warm effusions of his grateful and enamoured heart.

To trace the progress of nature, unvi-
tiated by false taste, and uncorrupted by
guilt, is, in my opinion, (said De Clavering,)
the most entertaining and instructive his-
tory we can read, and far more useful is the
language it contains than all the crabbed
and unfeeling documents of the most stu-
dious philosopher, who loses the gentle pro-
pensities of his nature by stuffing up the
dust of ancient libraries, till the spiders have
woven their cobweb-looms in his head, and
left no space for nature to creep in, and shew
her unadulterated face ; but, in my opinion,
the chief happiness, both of man and woman,

consists in the knowledge and practice of all the social affections."

The Baron, struck with these observations, held out his hand to De Clavering, requesting to be better acquainted with him, and apologizing for his former neglect, which was chiefly owing to the singularity of his situation, which made him behold every man younger than himself with envy and suspicion; "but now (added he) I have resigned all my pretensions to the prior claims of my son, wishing to atone for my past errors, and to prove myself worthy the esteem of all those to whom he owes an obligation."

"To me, my lord, (replied De Clavering,) your son owes nothing: till a few days back I knew not of his residence in the castle: to my respect and esteem I considered him as having a just claim. From the first hour I had the honour of being introduced to him, I felt a desire to serve him; but all I ever did was to accompany him
from

from the castle to the chapel, for which I never expected to be pardoned by your lordship."

"But, as his lordship offers you his friendship, (said the giddy and spirited Hugh Camelford,) you had petter accept it now he is in the humour. Lorts are not always in the mind to be coot friends with teath and the toctor."

This essay of elocution obtained the Baron's notice, and, by making every one smile, succeeded to his wish. Camelford, thus encouraged, gave way to the unbounded cheerfulness of his disposition, by again renewing his attack upon his friend De Clavering, telling him it was high time for him to be prushing away the cobwebs of old patchelorsnip, and pecome a man of the world, otherwise no laty, maid, or witow, would undertake the care of his old pones, and the pones of those he had pought out of their craves. De Clavering, who seldom felt himself in the humour to be displeased

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with

with his young friend, owned that he was as singular in his sentiments as the ladies, he was afraid, might think him in his manners and appearance.

“ You must endeavour to become more modern, and like one of us, (said De Willows.) To be better known cannot fail to secure you a most favourable reception.”

“ A piece of advice I have often given him myself, (said Sir Philip.) To make our progress through life with credit and advantage to ourselves, we must so far become men of the world, as to seek for those favours it is not willing to bestow unsought or unfolicited.”

“ But, for a man to be able to get through it with uninterrupted success, (replied De Clavering, I have sometimes thought he must be brought up a rascal from the first. I own I should find so many places that would tempt me to halt in my way, that I should certainly be prevented reaching the envied and contested goal; for, before I
would

would submit to have my house crowded with a succession of what might be called good company, I would take an inn, and, in the character of mine host, play a safer, and as pleasant a game. I should not then be under the necessity of sacrificing my sentiments, or more of my time, than I found answered the purpose of keeping house to accommodate all comers and goers."

"What ! (said Camelford,) would you be peat py a prother toctor, because you would not apply a strengthening plaister of goot and smooth worts to make it stick close ? would you not gif the laties a healing cordial of compliments ro reconcile them to their los of peauty, their lap-dog, or their lofer ? Fie, man, they would not suffer you to toctor their cat !"

"What I might be tempted to do, or how far I might relax from my system, to please the ladies, (replied De Clavering,) I cannot tell till I become more *a man of the world*, and feel myself more attached to

many of its customs : but this I do know, there are a set of patients to whom I could not sacrifice my own sentiments to obtain the command of their purses. For instance, —can the man, who has wasted his youth in vice and debauchery, justly complain of a premature old age ? or ought he to excite the pity of any one who knew the source whence his miseries originated ? Can we sympathize with the man of business, who has brought upon himself the torturing paroxysms of a fever by the disappointment of some monopolizing plan, the success of which must have been productive of distress and misery to many hundreds of their fellow-creatures. Can the voluptuary and the drunkard think themselves entitled either to flattery or compassion, when their sufferings have been occasioned by eating till they gained a surfeit, or by drinking so hard as to make a kind of turnpike-road from their stomachs to their bowels.”

“ All in the way of business, (said Edwin.) Instead of quarrelling with the cause, you have

have nothing more to do, my good friend, but to turn their follies to your own account, and do as thousands have done before you—make them contribute in some way or other to the good of the community.”

“If we were disposed to quarrel with vice and folly every time we encounter them, (said Camelford,) we should be engaged in a perpetual contest, and should only ket proken pones and the plister of contention for our pains.”

“True, (replied the venerable father Anfelm, who till now had observed a placid silence as he listened to the above conversation,) we should all agree to make the same allowance for the failings and frailties of others as we are inclined to do when we fit in judgment upon our own, and rather strive to find excuses than causes to condemn; like the blessed master we all unite to serve, whose precepts and practice were calculated for the good and happiness of all mankind.”

“Just

“Just so would mine be, my dear father, (said De Clavering,) so far as an erring mortal can be supposed to copy a divine original; but I would not flatter people with a belief that I could feel for the miseries entailed by vice as I would for those which originated from any other cause. There are moments when I see the patient and virtuous sufferer looking up to me for health and life, that I would compound with pleasure to be any thing rather than what I am.”

“Rather (said Sir Philip) endeavour to rest satisfied with being what you are,—the true Samaritan, the friendly physician, who assumes the appearance of misanthropy, without having a grain of it in his composition.”

“In order to conceal feelings that do honour to his profession and to human nature.”

The Baron, having looked at every thing, and asked innumerable questions, the party next visited the rooms where Edwin and
Roseline

Roseline risked so much in daring to remove Walter, and in which he had so long remained undiscovered by the family. Here Walter himself described, in his own artless manner, the delight he felt when he, for the first time, saw the rising sun, and contemplated the brilliant scene which the moon and stars presented to his astonished sight ; he mentioned likewise his rapture when first convinced that the fair Roseline felt for him a mutual passion. He then described the conflicts he endured on the morning when he knew she was really gone to give her hand to another, and owned the miseries of that moment surpassed those of his whole life, and, if thrown into a scale against them, would have weighed down all. He then adverted to his feelings when he approached the altar, and to the awe and respect he felt at sight of the Baron.

In the evening it was proposed to take a ramble through the gardens belonging to the castle, now profusely decorated with all
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the variegated beauties of the soul-enlivening spring, which were on the eve of giving place to the succeeding charms of summer. Here it was that the happy, the grateful Walter met such a succession of wonders and delight as rendered the scene doubly pleasing to those who partook in his raptures.

Every flower, plant, and shrub, every tree, leaf, and vegetable, excited his admiration and gratitude. The distant fields,—the rising hills,—the water,—the numberless houses,—all, all were admired in turn, and became the theme of his praise.—It was a charming world,—it was the paradise of which he had read,—the very garden of Eden, such as our first parents possessed, and Roseline the magnet which gave such sweet attraction to all he saw, and all he should enjoy in it.

So much was he delighted with the scene, it was not till the shades of evening began to approach, and throw a gloom over the
face

face of nature, that even the gentle admonitions of Roseline could prevail upon him to return to the castle. Like another Cymon, he found liberty too great a blessing, too pleasing to be willing to part with it when once he had tasted its soul-reviving influence.

Many of the following days were spent in making excursions round the country, and in shewing him every thing worthy of notice. He visited the neighbouring towns and villages, looked into the churches, saw the sea, and was conveyed on board a ship, whose wonderful construction, and the vast world of waters on which it so majestically floated, awakened every sensation of astonishment. He was next indulged by sailing on the river Waveney in an open boat, rowed by some of our old English sailors, whose rough and cheerful humour gratified and entertained him.

A horse was likewise procured for him :
he soon learned to ride, and became so fond
of

of the exercise, that few days passed without his going some miles about the country. His fine figure, expressive countenance, and conciliating manners, his gentleness, and unceasing good humour, made him an universal favourite, and all the inhabitants of Bungay welcomed his appearance among them with every testimony of respect, joy, and satisfaction.

The Baron and his friend, Sir Philip, had many consultations respecting the intended marriage of their children, whose youth and total ignorance of the world, of which Walter could scarcely be called an inhabitant, rendered it absolutely necessary that he should be properly introduced at court, in order to have his birth made known, and his rights and titles ascertained. It was equally necessary that he should become more conversant with the customs and manners of that world, on whose stage he was now to make so distinguished a figure; and, as he had been prevented seeing foreign countries, it was a duty

duty the Baron thought incumbent upon him to take care he should be well acquainted with his own, and instructed in the value of its just and equitable laws, which, he had cause to lament, were sometimes abused by the designs of artful and wicked men, though the envy of every other nation in the world.

When these designs were made known to Walter, the distress it produced is not to be described. To be separated from Roseline!—the thought was agony;—without seeing her every day, without being in the same place with her, it was not to be borne. He should never be able to acquire any knowledge unless the gentle maid, to whom he was indebted for life, was near, and by her soul-enlivening presence animated his endeavours, while in her smiles he should find a bright reward for the unwearied pains he should not shrink from encountering for her sake.

Roseline

Roseline was not at all better reconciled to the plan, nor more at ease than himself. She was apprehensive he might in the great world see some one he liked better than herself. She had heard men were inconstant and prone to change. The heart she had gained in the dungeon of Bungay-castle might perchance, when engaged in the great world, surrounded by pleasure, and besieged by the bright eyes of beauty, stray from her bosom to that of a more lovely and accomplished mistress ;—to a more fond and faithful one it could not be entrusted ; but, as no one, she supposed, could refuse the attentions of Walter, she trembled at the idea of being separated.

These timid fears were not kept from the ear of her lover, who, in some degree, quieted them with that persuasive eloquence which love never fails to bestow on its faithful votaries. He inquired if she thought it possible he could be so great a villain as to prefer the beauties of a court to the lovely

Roseline

Roseline of Bungay-Castle,—the gentle being who not only preserved his life, but taught him to enjoy it, whose unwearied attentions smoothed the bed of sickness, removed the veil of ignorance, and gave to his unfortunate life the first bright moment it had ever known. He vowed, if he thought any thing he might find in the world could tempt him to forget her, or love her less than he did at that moment, he would voluntarily return to his dungeon, and never leave it more: he earnestly and pathetically petitioned his father and Sir Philip de Morney not to compel him to leave his adored Roseline till he was blest with calling her his own.

With this request, however, they could not with prudence comply: it was not only right, but absolutely necessary he should be publicly acknowledged as the Baron's son before his marriage took place, to prevent the establishment of his rights being subject to suspicion or litigation. Against reasons
so

so weighty and just there was no contending, and therefore they were obliged to submit, though these untaught children of simple nature yielded very reluctantly to a plan which was to secure in their possession all those fascinating enjoyments which the inhabitants of our busy world are continually pursuing, and to obtain which, without any necessity or compulsion, they often make more important sacrifices.

S Albert was no longer considered or treated as a servant. The Baron generously determined, as soon as he reached town, to give such orders to his attorney as should secure him a genteel independency ; and, as he was no longer distressed with the apprehension of being separated from his beloved master, he enjoyed all the comforts, with a grateful heart which the liberality of his benefactors bestowed, and met with that unfeigned respect, from every one who knew the worth and integrity of his character, to which he was so justly entitled.

As

As Audrey was attending her young lady, in her apartment, after she had been at the chapel to be married, and returned from thence without becoming a bride, she, as it may be supposed, was too full of the occurrences of the day to be silent on a subject every one was talking about, but which she did not, on her part, by any means approve, knowing what her own feelings would have been on a similar occasion.

“ Well, to be sure and certain, miss, (cried she,) the like of this was never heard since the mencement of the world ; for to go to church to be married, to take the bride’s groom in your hand, as a body may say, and then to come back as you went, without being married at all ! As I have a virtuous and Christian soul to be saved, if I had been volved in such a quandrary, I would never have left the chapel without a husband, young or old, let what would have been the consequence.—People flee and jeer so about misventures of this kind, and asks one for
bride’s

bride's cake, and talks so indeliberately on this subject : however, don't fret, miss ; it seems you may be married still, but, for my part, I like it best as it is."

" I think in this instance as you do, Audrey, (replied Roseline, with difficulty keeping herself from offending the honest-hearted Abigail, by bursting into a violent fit of laughter,) yet the Baron is certainly a fine-looking old gentleman."

" Fine feathers make fine birds, (said Audrey,) but as to his being fine-looking, Christ Jesus, miss, to be sure master Cuford, the blind god of love, has made you blinder than himself."

Roseline could no longer preserve her gravity.

" Blind or not blind, (said she,) I assure you, Audrey, I thought the Baron looked and talked like an angel after we returned from the chapel ; and, what is more, ugly as you think him, I love him dearly, and
cannot

cannot help looking at him with pleasure and delight."

"To be sure, (said Audrey aside,) the disappointment has turned her head, and arranged all her interjects.—As sure as God is true, miss, (said she.) you have taken strange vaggaries into your head: it was but yesterday I thought you were going into a vapid recline, as I have heard you mention, and now I verily thinks Bedlam will be your potion instead of a husband."

"As far as I know I am now in my proper senses, (cried Roseline, laughing,) notwithstanding your prognostics, and taking so much pains to convince me of the contrary."

"Well, well, it may be so, miss, (replied the mortified damsel;) I know but little of nostics; but this I do know, there is no recounting for the humour of quality people. The young Baron however, it must be said, if poor folks can see and judge, is to the full as good as his father. Hand-

some as you think him, and though he cannot speak to make himself understood, and do not know his right hand from his left, or the moon from a green cheese or young gosling, he may soon be taught to know what's what. He was monstrously frightened when he saw his father, and took him for a negromancer it seems."

"You have been strangely misinformed, Audrey, (interrupted Roseline,) the young lord is neither so ignorant nor so soon alarmed as you have been taught to believe. I have known him long, and therefore, if you will rely upon my word, I assure you he is one of the most amiable and best of human beings."

"Well, miss, (again continued Audrey,) I must think that your brain is cracked, or that love has overset your understanding; for I am told by Pedro, who knows every thing about every body, that, till this very blessed day, the sweet young gentleman have been chained down in a dungeon, and never
looked

looked upon the face of man, woman, or child, not even the mother who bore him. It was tirely on his account, we all thinks, that the bustle, fufs, and disturbances in the castle riginated, and I dare say if the old Baron had refused to own him for a son, we should every one of us have been witched into the Red Sea, and drowned as the Gyp-tens were. I hope now, however, the spells will be taken away, and we shall see only men and women, made of flesh and blood like ourselves, for I hate ghosts."

"Amen! (cried Roseline;) I trust we shall be very quiet and happy, and that neither witches nor evil spirits will have any thing to do with us."

"I say amen again, (replied Audrey,) for I always likes to pray whenever I see any one else set about it. Thank God you escaped the claws of the Baron: I verily thinks I could not have found courage enuf to have married him myself."

Roseline rejoiced when her prating attendant bade her good night, and she hoped soon to forget in the arms of sleep both the painful and pleasant events of the day; but she now found joy as great an enemy to repose as grief had been the preceding night. To find her lover, the acknowledged son of her intended husband; yet to have his consent,—the consent of her parents to love Walter, and be beloved by him,—to know he was restored to liberty, rank, and fortune, to the protection of a father, and herself released from an engagement to which she never had consented,—it was such a sudden, such an unexpected reverse of fortune, as she could scarcely prevail upon herself to believe real. She had been assured too she should one day be the wife of Walter,—be permitted to live with him,—see him always, and without fear or controul be allowed to study and contribute to his happiness;—it was rapture, it was felicity far beyond her hopes.

Having

Having once entered on a train of thinking, so delightful to a fond imagination, it effectually precluded sleep from shedding its poppies over her pillow ; besides, to have slept would have been for some hours to have lost the pleasure of thinking of Walter.

No sooner did she see the god of day break forth in all his glory from the portals of the East, than she quitted her bed. Never before had she observed the sun so brilliant,—never before had the face of nature looked so charming : every tree which she saw wave its branches had acquired new beauties, and even the sturdy and impenetrable walls of the castle seemed to be wonderfully improved.

With spirits harmonized by love and expectation, and a mind enlivened by hope, she bent her knee in humble gratitude to that God who said, “ Let there be light, and it was so,” With a heart truly sensible of the blessings she enjoyed, and thankful

for those she was permitted to behold at a distance, she fervently prayed that neither Walter nor herself might be tempted, in the midst of prosperity to forget the useful lessons they had learned in the school of adversity.



CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

AS the dreaded day of separation drew near, the dejection which appeared on the countenance of the lovers was too visible to escape the observation of their friends.—The Baron felt himself particularly hurt : his son had already endured so much misery by his neglect and unpardonable compliance with the wishes of an artful and designing mother-in-law, that, to inflict any farther mortifications or sufferings on him, was in reality to inflict them more severely upon himself : he therefore promised to return within

six weeks, or two months, to unite the young people.

This period of time, reckoned in the usual way, was not long ; but lovers are not guided by the same rules, nor can bring themselves to calculate hours and days, weeks and months, like other people. To repeat the tender adieus, the fears, tears, cautions, and promises, of everlasting truth, would perhaps be tiresome to some of our readers, as it would be merely a repetition of the same fine and tender things which have been said by ten thousand fond lovers, upon ten thousand interesting occasions ; suffice it then to say, the Baron and his son departed from the castle at the appointed time, and left the disconsolate Roseline in a state none could envy, and all were inclined to pity ; and so much was the heart of her lover afflicted at being the cause of distressing her, he could not be prevailed upon to join in any conversation, and scarcely looked up till he entered the great and busy city of London,

don, the noise and bustle of which drew him in some measure from his reverie, which had been nearly as painful to his friends as to himself, and the Baron, eager to disperse the gloom from the countenance of his son, pointed out some of the most striking objects to engage his attention, as they were whirled along to a very noble house in——square, where we must leave him for the present, in order to return to the castle.

From the moment of Walter's departure the disconsolate Roseline sunk into so absolute a state of dejection, as not only distressed but alarmed her friends. She shunned society, seldom joined in conversation, and, if left a few moments by herself, fled to the apartments once inhabited by her lover ;—there, and there only, did she assume the appearance of cheerfulness ; every place in which she had seen him was endeared to her remembrance. The chairs on which he had rested, the table on which he had written, the window at which he had stood to

listen for her coming,—all were interesting objects, and loved by her for his sake ; and, in being deprived of seeing him, of hearing no longer the sound of a voice so long endeared to her fond imagination, she felt so total a deprivation of all that served to render life or fortune of real value, that she determined in her own mind, if this regretted lover should prove forgetful or inconstant, if he should return no more to the castle, to end her days in his forsaken apartments ; for what would be the world to Roseline de Morney, if she should see Walter Fitzosbourne no more ?

Pompey, the little dog, which she had seen the second time of going to the dungeons, and which had been the favourite and faithful companion of her lover during some years of his confinement, she would scarcely permit to be out of her sight : to him she talked of his master, and in caressing the grateful little animal felt pleasure and consolation.

Sir

Sir Philip and Lady de Morney were distressed beyond measure at seeing the despondency of their daughter, which they feared would put an end to all their flattering hopes. They endeavoured by every soothing and tender attention to reconcile her to this temporary separation, and in a short time succeeded so far as to prevail upon her to resume her usual employments. They advised her to dissipate her fears, and try to regain her spirits for the sake of the lover whose absence she lamented, reminding her how much it would harass and distress him, if, at his return to the castle, he found she had brought upon herself an indisposition which might still preclude him from enjoying her society.

But their cares and anxieties were soon increased, and their minds occupied and thrown into the utmost consternation, from a circumstance more unaccountable, inexplicable, and alarming, than any thing they had ever encountered.

Madeline had escaped from the nunnery, and Edwin had left the castle. No one could tell what was become of them, but all supposed they were gone off together.— A general confusion took place ; messengers were sent in pursuit of the fugitives, and a very considerable reward was offered to any who would bring tidings of Madeline. Sir Philip de Morney joined in the search, and sent out large parties of his men, in hopes they would be able to discover the place of their concealment.

Roseline, though less surprised, was extremely shocked at the dangerous step her brother and friend had ventured to take.— The abbess was angry, the fathers enraged, and the youthful offenders threatened with the utmost severity the laws could inflict, should they be found out. Lady de Morney was wretched beyond description, and Roseline, who almost lost the remembrance of her own sorrows at seeing the agonies of her mother, and in fears for her brother, was
alarmed

alarmed at the return of every messenger.— These affectionate relatives trembled lest they should bring tidings of the unfortunate lovers. A week however elapsed, and no discovery being made, Roseline secretly cherished hopes that they would be able to escape their pursuers.

She accompanied Sir Philip and Lady de Morney to the nunnery : they soon removed the displeasure of the abbess, and dispersed the gloom, which had long hung upon her brow, at their first entrance : they likewise softened the asperity of father Anselm, and the rest of his brethren, who had written to inform the father of Madeline of the occurrence which had taken place, and had received an answer dictated by the spirit of malice and revenge, vowing to renounce her for ever, unless she returned to the nunnery, and instantly took the veil ; at the same time adding every thing that passion could suggest to rouse the vengeance of the fathers for the indignity offered to their sacred order
by

by the flight of a wretch he never again would acknowledge as a daughter.

This cruel and unfeeling letter operated directly contrary to what it was intended, and awakened feelings in the bosoms of men who had long been strangers to the world, and unpractised in the habits of social life,—too unpleasant to be encouraged. They felt a kind of trembling horror at the denunciations of a parent against a daughter, whose interesting features, sweetness of disposition, and gentleness of temper, had endeared her to every one in the nunnery.

Nearly a fortnight had now elapsed, and no tidings being heard of the fugitives, Lady de Morney began to revive, and she cherished the soul-reviving hope that her beloved Edwin would escape, and remain undiscovered till a pardon could be procured for him and his fair companion, for the crime they had committed in robbing their holy church of a votary designed for its service ;
and

and she lingered with impatient fondness to clasp her son and the lovely Madeline to her maternal bosom. Sir Philip was much hurt by this affair; and, though he said very little on the subject, it was very visible to every one that his mind was very deeply wounded.

It may now be necessary that we should give some account of the means made use of to escape, and the cause which drove the young people to take so desperate a step.

The abbess, who felt an almost maternal regard for Madeline, had observed with affectionate regret that there was something which preyed deeply upon her spirits, but had not the least suspicion of the affection which she cherished for her nephew; and, being too much bigotted to her religion, too much attached to the habits of a monastic life, to suppose any one could long remain unhappy after having given up a world which she had voluntarily quitted and never

regretted, she confined her observations to her own bosom, and, in drawing her conclusions, forgot the melancholy and distressing cause which had determined her seclusion from the world. Time had likewise in some degree blunted those tender feelings which would otherwise have taught her to make more indulgent allowances for the feelings and conflicts of nineteen, when sentenced by an arbitrary parent to the unsocial and rigid rules of an order that precluded the soul-enlivening, the enchanting influence of love.

The abbess, on receiving a letter from the father of Madeline, with a peremptory command for her instantly taking the veil, summoned her into the presence of father Anselm and herself, and the letter was put into her hand, without any kind of preface that could discover or soften its contents.— The effect this horrid mandate had on the mind of their youthful charge could not be concealed : she was instantly obliged to be conveyed

conveyed to her cell, and remained for some hours in a state that threatened distraction.

The alarming situation of Madeline distressed both the good father and the sympathizing abbess ; but, circumstanced as they were, they could only pity ; for they would have considered it as a crime of the most sacrilegious nature to have assisted in depriving their holy institution of a votary so likely to be an ornament and acquisition to it ; and, as the father of Madeline was determined she should embrace a monastic life, they had neither any right nor inclination to contend against a decision which operated so much in their favour, and would add so lovely a sister to their society : they agreed therefore that it would be better to take no notice, unless she herself should voluntarily impart the cause of her distress.

It is now become absolutely necessary to inform our readers that Edwin had for some weeks conquered the fears of Madeline, and prevailed

prevailed on her to grant him frequent interviews in the chapel. He had also extorted a promise from her, when matters came to the last extremity, to fly with him, if her escape from the nunnery could be effected, in order to avoid a fate which her love had taught her to think of all others the most miserable, and to accept his vows instead of taking those which would separate them for ever.

On the one hand, happiness stood portrayed in its most captivating colours ;—on the other, wretchedness, solitary wretchedness grinned with ghastly horror and meagre aspect. At her age, I am inclined to think, few young ladies would have hesitated how to choose, particularly if, like the artless and gentle Madeline, they had given away their heart to an amiable and impassioned lover.

Edwin, in his stolen visits to the chapel, had usually been accompanied by his trusty friend

friend Albert, and once or twice Walter had been of the party. On the promises and intrepid firmness of Albert they rested their security of not being discovered. Madeline's situation was likewise become so alarming and distressing, she no longer yielded to those timid fears which had formerly deterred her from meeting her lover. She found herself so encompassed with dangers, that it required both resolution and spirit to disengage herself from the fate which threatened her; and, as no farther time could be given either to deliberation or doubt, and no alternative remained but to escape from the nunnery or take the veil, she hesitated no longer, but met, fearlessly met her lover, in order to settle a proper plan to secure the success of their design, which, as it drew near being put in practice, appeared both hazardous and dangerous.

Their meetings in the chapel were frequently interrupted by the friars or nuns, who had generally some sacred duty to perform.

form either for the living or the dead, in the execution of which some of the fathers had been extremely alarmed, and it was whispered throughout the sacred walls, and by some means the report crept into the world, that the chapel of the nunnery was disturbed by an invisible agent, which was considered as a miracle in favour of its holy institution.

It was an age of bigotry and superstition, when every plan was adopted to impress on the minds of the people that reverence and awe which would prevent their finding out the various arts made use of to impose on their belief. Hence that reverence and enthusiasm for relics shewn in almost every church and chapel, and applied to for aid on all important occasions.

Yet it sometimes happened that impositions were discovered, but the power and influence of the priests prevented, as much as possible, reports so dangerous gaining any credit,

credit, and the minds of the common people were kept so much in awe by fear, and so hoodwinked by superstition, that thousands resorted daily to one repository or another, in order to feast their eyes with its sacred treasures.

“ At Reading they shewed an angel’s wing, that brought over the spear’s point which pierced our Saviour’s side, and as many pieces of the cross were found as joined together would have made a big cross. The rood of grace, at Boxley, in Kent, had been much esteemed, and drawn many pilgrims to it. It was observed to bow and roll its eyes, and look at times well pleased or angry, which the credulous multitude, and even some of the inferior priests, imputed to a divine power; but all this was afterwards discovered to be a cheat, and it was brought up to St. Paul’s cross, and all the springs were openly shewed which governed its several motions.

“ At

“ At Hales, in Gloucestershire, the blood of Christ was shewn in a phial, and it was believed that none could see it who were in mortal sin ; and so, after good presents were made, the deluded pilgrims went away well satisfied if they had seen it. This was the blood of a duck, renewed every week, put in a phial, very thick on one side, as thin on the other ; and either side turned towards the pilgrims as the priests were satisfied with their oblations. — Other relics were shewn as follows :— God’s coat, our Lady’s smock, part of God’s supper, our Lady’s girdle of Bruton ; red filke, a solemne relic sent to women in travail ; the parings of St. Edmund’s nails, relics for rain, for avoiding the weeds growing in corn, &c. &c.”—*

It happened one night, when our young lovers were deeply engaged in a most important and interesting conversation, in

* Vide Grose’s Antiquities, copied from an original letter, written by R. Layton.

in which they did not recollect there were any other beings but themselves in the world, they were terribly alarmed, and very near being discovered by the abrupt and sudden entrance of father Anselm, and one of the monks, into the chapel. They hastily approached the altar, being summoned to attend a dying monk, and to perform the ceremonies which the necessity of the case required. They were however informed by a voice, which appeared to rise from the earth on which they stood, that they might return in peace to their cells, for the soul of their dying brother was in no danger of being lost, their prayers and pious oraisons having already had a salutary effect.

It so happened, that the monk, having conquered the crisis of his distemper, was sunk into a profound sleep at their return, which promised a happy change in his favour. The whole society were summoned into the chapel the next morning, and informed of this miraculous communication. All the
proper

proper ceremonies were ostentatiously performed which such an honourable attestation of their sincere piety required, and the sick monk considered as worthy of canonization.

A few nights after, a monk, who had forgotten to place one of the consecrated vessels on the high altar, which father Anselm had particularly requested should be left there against the following day, on which the sacrament was to be administered with the utmost solemnity, on recollecting the omission, rose from his bed, and stole softly into the chapel to obey the orders he had received. This unfortunately was a night on which the lovers had agreed to meet. Before he had reached the altar, he was somewhat startled at seeing one of the oldest and most austere of the nuns kneeling by the grave of a father lately deceased, and with uplifted hands praying that pardon and peace might be extended to his soul.

The monk, when he came to the altar, instantly dropped on his knees before it, unwilling the old nun should suppose he came upon a less pious errand than herself; but he was soon frightened from his devotions by a soft voice, which seemed to descend from behind a very fine painting of the crucifixion.—He was desired to return to his cell, no longer to act the hypocrite, and in future to perform more punctually the duties of his office.

The monk no sooner heard this alarming address, than he hurried out of the chapel as fast as his gouty legs and the numerous infirmities of age would permit him; but the nun, who was at too great a distance from the monk to hear the cause of his terror, went on with those devotional rights which a particular regard for the departed father rendered so gratifying to the feelings of her pious and affectionate heart, that she was in no hurry to conclude them; when the same mysterious agent, whose voice appeared

to rise from the grave of her deceased favourite, near which she was so devoutly kneeling, shivering with age and cold, roughly warned her to have done, advising her to go to rest and sleep in peace, as he did, who no longer could be disturbed by her tongue or benefited by her prayers.

The poor frightened nun scampered off as fast as she could, muttering something against the ingratitude of man, who, dead or alive, was unworthy the attentions of her pious sex. Yet, as she crossed herself, she secretly rejoiced at having, as she thought, obtained leave of heaven and father John to abstain from such great and unreasonable demands upon her oraisons in future.— She took care, however, the next morning to inform the monk, with seeming exultation, of her being so highly favoured as to hear a voice from heaven, which excused her from praying at those hours appointed for mortals to be at rest.

This was a night calculated to alarm the lovers ; for no sooner had the nun left the chapel, than another entered to fetch a solemn relic, to send to a woman who was in travail, from the chest near which they were seated. As she was looking for the precious treasure, they were trembling at the danger they were in of being discovered ; for there was but just time to step into the tomb which led to the subterraneous passage, when they were thus the third time disturbed.— The nun, as she closed the chest, was addressed in the following words.

“ Wear Mary Magdalene’s girdle twice a week :—place the scull of St. Lawrence at the East corner of your cell, and live on bread and water every fifth day ; or neither you, nor your father-confessor will escape purgatory.”

Down dropped the relic, and away ran the nun to repeat to her cher ami the warning which had been given her ; but, whe-

ther he was as much terrified as herself we do not know, as the lovers very soon effected their escape, and the voice was heard no more.

No longer to puzzle our readers, excite their fears, or keep them in suspense, respecting this miraculous voice, which had alarmed the Baron in his visit to the cells, and had likewise been the occasion of much surprise, and some exultation, to the pious inhabitants of the nunnery, it is necessary to inform them that it proceeded from Albert, who was himself a ventriloquist, or person possessed of the power of using a kind of artificial hollow voice, in such a manner, as to make the sound appear to come from any part of the room, wherever he happened to be, or from any animal that was present in it.

This uncommon power, rarely known in that age, Albert had frequently exercised

cised to amuse and entertain the solitary hours of his master, in his long and painful seclusion from the world, and afterwards to serve him and his friend.

It may not perhaps, in this place, be improper to mention, that, a few years since, a person came to St. Edmund's Bury, in Suffolk, whose uncommon and wonderful powers of throwing his voice to any distance, and into whatever place he chose, alarmed some, and surprised all who witnessed this strange and almost unaccountable phenomenon of nature; therefore, in an age so much more prone to indulge the idle chimeras of superstition, so much under the dictatorial bigotry of priestcraft, it is not to be wondered that a circumstance so uncommon should be considered as miraculous, particularly among a set of men who had recourse to such various arts, and took such wonderful pains to instill into the minds of the people a firm and unshaken belief that

miracles were shewn on some important occasions, in order to confirm the truth of the religion they professed.



CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

BY following the cautious directions of Albert, Madeline escaped from the nunnery undiscovered, and, accompanied by her lover, lost, in the happiness of the present moment, all remembrance of the trials she had sustained, and all apprehensions of what she might encounter in future. Edwin, from a principle of honour, did not inform his friends, De Willows, De Clavering, and Camelford, of his intention; the only tax he levied on their friendship was to borrow a small sum of money of them to supply present exigencies, and procure such accommodations on the road as would be most a-

greeable and convenient to his fair companion.

About midnight he led the trembling agitated maid, unattended by any one but himself, to the entrance of the subterranean passage. With difficulty and danger they made their way through this scene of desolation and terror. Having opened the door which led them through the same gloomy paths Edwin had formerly traced, they narrowly escaped being discovered by the sentinels who guarded Mettingham-Castle.— Alarmed at their danger, they made not a moment's delay, but hurried on till they came to a retired and almost unfrequented road, where they found a man and horses waiting their arrival. These horses had been hired of a countryman, who agreed to send for them the next morning to a neighbouring town.

Though money was undoubtedly very scarce in the age in which the characters lived

lived that furnished us with these memoirs, yet the necessaries of life were all so cheap, and the people in general so extremely hospitable, that it required but a moderate sum to procure accommodations for a journey to the most distant part of the kingdom, and, as there was then no marriage-act in force, the road to the temple of Hymen was more frequented, because it was neither found so difficult nor so thorny as it has been to too many of the present age.

As to the vulgar and old-fashioned habits of eating and drinking, they are matters in general but little thought of in expeditions under the directions of a god who is too sublime to be satisfied with common food. Our lovers felt so little inconvenience from either hunger or thirst, that they determined to make no delays on their journey, but such as were absolutely necessary. They were epicures only in love, and, till they arrived in London, were perfectly satisfied with such repasts as were to be procured from

any of the humble cottages on the road, by which prudent precaution they escaped undiscovered, notwithstanding the clamour their elopement had occasioned.

The morning after their arrival in London, a priest joined their hands in marriage, and rendered indissoluble those tender ties which had long united their hearts in love's most pleasing fetters. Too happy for reflection to interrupt their nuptial joys, too inexperienced to look forward to the consequences of an union thus inauspiciously commenced, and too sanguine to think the fond delusions of love could end but with life, they lived for many days in what might be called the delirium of the senses : in each other they saw and possessed all that constituted their ideas of pleasure. Madeline was the wife of the enamoured Edwin, and he was blest.—Edwin was become the husband and protector of Madeline, what then could she have to fear, for Edwin was the world to her ?

Alas !

Alas ! what a pity that so few, so scarce, and so short, are the hours of mortal happiness ! and that the fallacious foundation on which we rest such innumerable pleasing hopes, which present to our deluded imaginations the most lovely and inviting prospects, should so soon fall to the ground, and humble our air-built expectations in the dust !

As long as their little fund of worldly wealth held out, our new married lovers never recollected it must come to an end, or bestowed a thought on what steps were to be taken to secure the continuance of that felicity they had gone such daring lengths to obtain ; but an empty purse soon compelled them to recollect, that two people, however tender their attachment, or superlative their abilities,—however lovely their persons, or captivating their manners, require more substantial food than the god of love will condescend to furnish them with.

Accustomed to affluence, and not knowing what it was to be deprived even of the luxuries of life, they shuddered at the poverty which stared them in the face, and threatened them with absolute starvation: they blushed too at their own inability to procure for themselves the common necessities of life, and felt some very uncomfortable sensations at being in a stranger's house without the means of paying for their lodging or accommodations. To declare their poverty they were ashamed, and to make themselves and situation known was to run the risk of being separated for ever, as Edwin had no doubt but Madeline would be torn from him, and compelled to a monastic life, if discovered before his friends were reconciled, and would use their interest to procure his pardon.

Luckily, Madeline, amidst her new born fears, recollected it would be no difficult matter to find so great a man as Baron Fitzosbourne, and accordingly Edwin, wrapped up
and

and disguised as much as possible, set off to find his residence, and to obtain an interview with his two friends, Walter and Albert. He fortunately found the latter at home, and in a few hours was by him secretly admitted to Walter, who flew to embrace and welcome him to his father's mansion, making a number of tender inquiries after Roseline and the rest of his friends at the castle. He was both shocked and astonished when informed of Edwin's distressed and perilous situation, gently reproached him for not applying to him before, and for not having given him the slightest information of his intention before he married.

Edwin made the best excuses he could for his reserve. Vague and unsubstantial as they were, the generous Walter was soon reconciled to his friend, put his purse into his hand, and insisted upon being immediately introduced to his lovely bride. They returned with Edwin to his lodgings, and found Madeline in a state of the most painful

ful and restless suspense, which their presence instantly dispersed. After the compliments and congratulations were over, they sat down to consider seriously what could be done, and what steps were most proper to be taken to secure the persons of the new-married couple. Albert strenuously advised them not to attempt seeing the Baron in their present situation, but to wait patiently till some plan could be adopted for their farther safety. Walter promised in the mean time to supply them with money for all necessary expences.

The meeting of these friends was cordial and tender, and more cheerful than could have been supposed. Walter repeatedly protested, notwithstanding the difficulty and dangers with which they were surrounded, that he envied more than he pitied them,—complained of his own situation, as being more distressing and uncomfortable than their's, and declared himself unable to support a much longer separation from Roseline, without

without the deprivation of reason being added to that of all his other enjoyments.

On reflection, it was thought better that Walter should make the situation of the young couple known to the Baron without farther delay : this he readily undertook ; for, as the danger was great, rewards having been offered for the person of Madeline, procrastination would have only served to increase the difficulties they had to encounter.

Walter succeeded in his embassy beyond his hopes, and soon prevailed upon his father to comply with a plan they had thought of for the better security of Madeline ; namely, retiring secretly for the present to the environs of one of the Baron's castles, at a great distance from the metropolis, and concealing their real names and persons under the habits of peasants. To this scheme the Baron readily agreed, and promised not only to exert his utmost interest to procure a
pardon

pardon for them both, but instantly to write to Sir Philip and Lady de Morney to inform them of their safety and situation, and intercede in their behalf. He likewise called upon them the following day, presented them with a supply of cash for present exigencies, and sent them in one of his own carriages to the place of their concealment, where we will for a short time leave them, only observing they were as happy as our first parents before their fall: they sometimes indeed recollected the danger of being discovered, and trembled at the thought; but so much did they depend on the friendship and power of the Baron to protect them, should the dreadful misfortune ever befall them, that they determined not to let uncertain apprehensions of what might happen in future prevent their enjoying that portion of happiness which was now in their power, and the author would wish every one who peruses these pages to adopt and encourage the same useful philosophy.

Walter,

Walter, from the time of his arrival in London, till a few days previous to his seeing Edwin, had been restless and uncomfortable. The first masters of the age had been procured to instruct him. He was presented to his sovereign, and his introduction was attended with the most marked and distinguished honours.

Many fair ladies in the higher circles were lavish of their smiles, and many parents would gladly have seen him added to the train of their daughters' admirers, and, to lure him to their purpose, solicited his friendship, and sent him repeated invitations to their houses.

Pleasure courted him in a thousand varying forms, but he beheld her most seducing blandishments with disgust and stoical indifference. Neither the novelty of the scenes with which he was surrounded, the flattering attentions of beauty, or the variety of amusements, of which he was in a
manner

manner compelled to partake, could for one moment detach his mind from the fascinating Roseline. With her dwelt every wish, —on her unshaken tenderness rested his every hope of permanent felicity ; for her society he pined and languished ; and, to have heard the sound of her enchanting voice, he would voluntarily have bidden adieu to London, and all its pleasures. — If he attended to the instructions of his masters, he was actuated by the same motives, and he wished to be as wise as Plato, that he might be more worthy to possess a treasure he estimated beyond the wealth of worlds. —Noble young man !— would love operate on all youthful minds as it did on thine, it would be entitled to universal praise, and might justly be called the guardian-friend of innocence, the patron of every virtue.

At length, both the Baron and Albert were not only surprised, but alarmed at the visible alteration they observed in Walter, who often absented himself, and when questioned

tioned where he had been, and how he had been amusing himself, hesitated in his answers, and appeared at a loss what to say.

One evening the Baron particularly requested he would accompany him to some public place; but he pleaded a prior engagement, and, on being asked the nature of it, gave so trifling and unsatisfactory an answer, that the Baron was seriously displeased, and left the room, telling him he did not like to be treated with reserve, recommended him to recollect how much he had already been made a dupe to mysterious transactions, and not to forget that he had likewise been nearly a victim to artifice before he knew guile in his own heart or person.

As soon as he left the room, Albert approached his beloved master, and, with a tear trembling in each eye, told him he was to blame, and begged he would follow his father,

father, and do away his displeasure, by going as he requested.

“ My dear fellow, (cried Walter,) my father’s anger I could bear unmoved, because I do not feel myself deserving of it, but your gentle reproof has in a moment found its way to my heart. Perhaps I may be to blame, but surely, Albert, it is a little hard upon me to be compelled to stay in this place without being sometimes allowed to amuse myself according to my own inclination !”

“ What on earth (said Albert, with a sigh,) can on a sudden have made this change in you, who so lately had an invincible objection to going among strangers, lest you should fall into the snares that are so frequently spread to entangle the unwary !—I thought——”

“ Allons, my dear fellow, (replied the impatient Walter,) don’t just now attempt to think ;—you are a good creature :—but I can stay no longer to listen to you ; I will
hear

hear you as early as you please in the morning. Would to God my sweet Roseline had accompanied her brother to London !”

“ Would to heaven she had ! (sighed Albert :) Here is something wrong going forwards. I must be on my guard how I proceed, or my young master will be drawn into some scrape that may lead to mischief, while the fair maid of the castle may be left to wear the willow.—Now, or never, must be the moment of action.—A thought has struck me ;—it must be so.”

Away went Albert, and I hope none of my readers will have any objection to accompany him in his friendly expedition.

He instantly hurried out of the house, attended by a stout and faithful servant.—They were so quick in their proceedings, that they very soon perceived the object of their pursuit walking before them. After following him through many streets, they saw him stop at a very good-looking house, the door of which was opened by a servant.
in

in a rich livery. Albert hesitated for a moment what to do:—to follow him would have been both daring and imprudent, and, instead of setting matters to rights, might have brought on greater difficulties; he therefore stepped into a jeweller's shop nearly opposite the house into which the young Fitzosbourne had entered, desiring his servant to keep a watchful eye. He spent a few shillings, and then carelessly inquired of the shopkeeper who it was inhabited the handsome house in which he saw so many lights.

The man smiled, looked at him very earnestly, and then replied, "If I did not think you were a stranger, sir, I should have supposed you were joking with me, by asking that question, for I thought all the world had known the Jezebel who lives there."

"You have raised my curiosity to a higher pitch, (said Albert.) I have so long been absent from this city, that I know but little
of

of what has been doing in it, and would thank you to answer my question with sincerity, while I am looking over the things I want to purchase."

"No man (replied the complaisant shopkeeper) is happier to please his customers than I am, or more grateful for favours received; but, as one person's money is as good as another's, and as I take a pretty round sum every year from the fair inhabitants of that house, I have no business to be telling of their frailties: however, if I can oblige you, sir, and you will promise me to be secret, and not bring my name in question."——

Albert now became more and more eager to obtain the wished-for intelligence, and not only promised all that he had requested, but to reward him for his trouble, by recommending his shop to some friends who had it greatly in their power to serve him. This at once put an end to the honest jeweller's reserve; for, though he would not voluntarily

rily have told a scandalous tale of any one, yet he saw no objection to speaking the truth when he could serve himself by so doing.

“ Please your honour, (he began, for he took it into his head at that moment that Albert was a great man,) in that house lives the noted Mrs. C——, who keeps so many fine young women, that all the fine young men of the age are fond of obtaining admittance, though for that indulgence they often sacrifice health, fortune, and even life itself. Ah ! God knows, I have seen sad doings, and many a one have I wished might escape the plans laid for their destruction ; but, if the devil himself were to fall into her clutches, I think he would be puzzled to effect his escape.”

“ Has she many visitors just now ?” interrupted Albert.

“ As to their number, that is impossible for me to ascertain ; but of this I am positive, she is never without some, and at this very time I think there is something extraordinary going

going on, for one of her nymphs came this morning to purchase a wedding-ring, and, on my joking her a little on the subject, she said it was not for herself but Miss C——, daughter to the old hag, who is a very lovely girl, and well known upon the town. On my expressing myself happy to hear she was going to marry, and become an honest woman, the girl burst into a violent fit of laughter, and called me a puritanical hypocrite.”

“ Let Catharine once become a wife, (said she,) and then we shall see who will dare to call her virtue in question. She will, I hope, before to-morrow night be married to the only son of one of the wealthiest barons in the kingdom,—a young nobleman who knows so little of the world, that it is absolutely necessary he should have a wife who can instruct him, and I know no one better able to undertake the task than the daughter of Mrs. C——.”

Albert with difficulty concealed his agitation at hearing this alarming tale. Recovering himself, however, he inquired of his informer if he recollected the name of the young gentleman.—After a moment's hesitation, the jeweller replied, “the name was twice repeated, but it ran so glibly off the lady's tongue, that I have since forgotten it.”

“Should you know it again?” asked Albert; who, on the jeweller's answering that he thought he should, mentioned several, to all of which a negative was given. At length Fitzosbourne was introduced.—“The very person, (cried the jeweller :)—the Baron has but one son; and him, as this girl told me, he has but lately found: but he is such an idiot, and so easily imposed on, that, upon my soul, were I his father, I should think him better lost than found.”

The jeweller might have gone on with his observations as long as he pleased, had not his distressed auditor recollected the danger in which,

which, perhaps, his beloved young master was at that moment involved. He started up, and, catching hold of his companion's hand, told him, he must that moment go with him. The man drew back: Albert perceived the folly of his abruptness, and, making some apologies, informed the astonished jeweller, that the business on which he was going would admit of no delay,—that if he would accompany him, lend his assistance, and procure two or three spirited young men to be of the party, he should be well rewarded for his trouble, and would have reason to bless the day chance directed him to his shop.

This promise was a sufficient temptation to a tradesman who had a large family, little money, and few friends. He summoned some of his men from an adjoining workshop, and, thus attended, Albert sallied into the street. His servant, who was in waiting, informed his master a priest had been just admitted into the house he was watching, and

that he had seen the young lord at the window with a beautiful woman hanging on his arm, who appeared to be in tears.

This intelligence made them hurry on.—Albert rapped at the door, requesting the others to keep out of sight till he was secure of obtaining admittance. A servant soon appeared; Albert inquired if his mistress were at home. The fellow replied that his lady was then particularly engaged, and could not be spoken to, adding, he might call again in the morning.

“The morning will not do, my friend; I must see your mistress this evening, (said Albert;) my business is quite as particular, I believe, as that in which she may be engaged, therefore make way, and let me come in.”

The fellow attempted to shut the door, but the posse in waiting, on being beckened by Albert, came to his assistance, and they all rushed into the house. Albert, the jeweller,

eller, and the rest of the party, except one, who was left to guard the fellow at the door, went as gently as possible up a spacious staircase. They heard voices at a distance, and were directed by the sound to the door of the apartment which contained the party, who appeared to be engaged in a warm dispute.

At times they could distinguish female voices, and very soon Albert heard that of his beloved master exalted to its highest pitch. This at once determined him to open the door, but he found it fastened within side : he then loudly demanded admittance ; a female scream was all the answer he received. Again he called : some one then asked what was wanted, adding, whoever it was that intruded on them so rudely must wait till another opportunity.

“ Wait no longer, (cried Walter,) but force the door ; I know not but my life may be endangered.”

The door was instantly burst open. What a scene presented itself ! Walter, with a face pale as ashes, and apparently in the utmost confusion, was endeavouring to disengage himself from the embraces of a young woman, who had fallen at his feet, and clasped her arms around him. The priest held a prayer-book in his hand, which was opened at the matrimonial service.—A fierce looking man in the naval uniform, the old procurefs, and another of her nymphs, completed the group.

The instant Walter saw his friend enter the apartment, by a desperate effort he disengaged himself from the syren who had held him captive, flew to Albert, and brandishing his sword, called upon the wretch who had endeavoured to inveigle him into a forced marriage to draw, and receive the reward of his treachery ; but Albert ordered the culprit to be secured, and requested Walter not to stain the purity of his sword with the blood of such a villain.—

During

During this contest, the women and the priest sneaked out of the room unobserved, and, though the strictest search was made throughout the house, not a creature could be found in it that belonged to the family, but the servant who admitted them, and who had been prevented following the rest by the person left to guard him.

Albert insisted, before he left the house, on sending for proper officers to take the prisoners into custody; but Walter, who wished this affair to be kept as secret as possible, entreated, with so much earnestness, on the villain's making a promise of amendment, and leaving the kingdom, to have him liberated, that his friend, after a little hesitation, complied, on condition that the two fellows should be left bound in different apartments till the vile mistress of the house, or some of her associates, should venture to return.

The honest jeweller was entreated to be secret, and promised an ample recompense.

His people were liberally paid, and Albert, with an exulting heart, attended home his agitated friend, who, after recovering his spirits in some degree, gave him the following account of the circumstances which had drawn him into a situation that might have been as fatal to his peace as they would have been disgraceful to his character, had not his guardian-friend arrived in time to prevent the threatened danger, the whole of which he was now convinced had been planned for the purpose of drawing him into marriage, resting their hopes of success on his ignorance of the world.

“ I take shame to myself, dear Albert, (said the grateful Walter,) for not informing you this evening of my engagement, which you, who know the strength of my attachment to the charming Roseline, will not suppose was meant to be of the nature it proved. I knew not that the worthless woman, whose daughter it has been my ill luck frequently to meet at several public places,

places, was of so despicable a character.— Chance, or, as I now suspect, design, has likewise frequently thrown her in my way in my morning rambles: but what induced me to visit at her mother's house, was the having found her one evening in the passage of the play-house, waiting the arrival of her carriage, in the greatest distress; and what served to add to it was the behaviour of two or three young men, who said some very rude things to her in my hearing, for which I chastised them with my cane, and the frightened fair one fainted in my arms as soon as I had driven them away. I supposed they had been led to insult her by having made too free with the bottle; but they doubtless knew her well enough to discover her designs against me.

“ When she recovered from the fit into which I imagined they had terrified her, I could do no less than see her home; and, when I called the next morning, I was introduced to her mother, whose unbounded

gratitude and flattering acknowledgments, for the trifling service I had rendered her sweet and amiable daughter, overwhelmed me with confusion, and convinced her I was a fool exactly suited to her purpose.

Being always received with the utmost politeness, and seeing nothing in the conduct or behaviour of either mother or daughter to excite suspicion, I continued to call upon them whenever I chanced to pass that way, and was in the humour to wish for conversation. They boasted of being of an ancient family in the North of England, appeared to live in credit and affluence, treated me with the utmost hospitality, and pressed me so warmly to make them frequent visits, that I promised to comply with their request, because I supposed by so doing I was removing a weight of obligation from their minds which seemed to give them pain.

Once or twice it happened when I called, that the young lady had walked out, and
the

the mother said a good deal about the mortification it would be to her to be told at her return I had called upon them in her absence; but this, till about two days ago, I considered as being the effusions of gratitude.

“And how (inquired Albert) were you at length undeceived?”

“By her mother,” continued Walter, who, after some little hesitation, with an appeal to my honour and humanity, to excuse the weakness of a fond parent, informed me of the passion I unfortunately, and as she feared undesignedly, had inspired in the bosom of her daughter, a passion she much doubted she would never be able to subdue, adding, that, just before my arrival, she had by mere force compelled her to walk out for air, as she saw with heart-felt distress the ravages despair had made in the constitution of her inestimable child.

I lamented the consequences of my introduction, and added, I would no more

venture into a family whose peace I had disturbed, acknowledged a prior engagement, and was about to quit the house, when the old lady entreated me earnestly not to adopt a measure so cruel and unjust: I therefore promised to call again; and, receiving an invitation for this evening, accepted it, but did not suppose them the kind of people they have proved.

“Had you no suspicion of their character?” asked Albert.

“None, by heaven! (replied Walter.)—I never saw the least appearance of indecency, or even levity, and heard no conversation that would have offended the nice ear of a Roseline de Morney.”

“The scheme was deeply laid, (said Albert.)—Pray proceed; I am impatient to know how you were received this evening.”

“First by the mother, (continued Walter, who appeared in the greatest distress.—On my inquiring the cause, she said she had informed Catharine of what had passed between

tween us ; that, on being told I was engaged, she fainted several times, and, before she recovered, her nephew, who was just returned from abroad, called at the house. This young man, she said, had been long passionately attached to her ; that, on seeing the situation of his cousin, he was necessarily informed of the cause,—was now with her, and had so earnestly entreated to have the honour of being introduced to me, that she could not find resolution to deny his request.—

“ I will confess to you, my dear Albert, I now began to suspect some design was formed against me ; but of what nature I was still at a loss to conjecture. I luckily had put on my sword, and I determined, if they attempted to confine or ill treat me, to sell my life as dearly as I could. However, it was not my life they wanted ; they had a more ambitious and less dangerous scheme in view. In a little time, the lady, drowned in tears, and with well-acted distress,

tress, entered the room, accompanied by her cousin, as the mother had called him. The gentleman chose to put on a fierce and threatening look, and swore I should do justice to his charming cousin, whom he loved more than life, or that moment settle the matter with him as a gentleman ought to do.

I laid my hand on my sword : Catharine flew to me, fell at my feet, and begged I would not terrify her to death by exposing a life so dear to the risk of fighting with her cousin. She then lamented her weakness, and entreated me to compassionate the sorrows in which I had involved her.

I loudly demanded what all this meant,—declared I had no design against her heart, nor any desire to be favoured with her hand, my own having been long engaged to the best and fairest of her sex, and to whom alone all my wishes were confined. The gentleman again approached me ; the lady chose

chose to fall into a fit, and was supported by her female accomplices. A priest at that moment entered the room.

“ You are come in good time, (said the pretended cousin,) to assist us in performing an act of justice.”

The young lady at that instant recovered, and, seeing her coming to me, I flew to the window, with an intention of opening it to call for assistance, and, on finding it fastened, had no longer any doubts of their premeditated designs against my peace. I therefore shook off the fair syren, (who had clasped her hands around my arm, and, with tears, and all the blandishments of artful beauty, besought me to have compassion on her sufferings,) and made an effort to get out at the door ; that was likewise fastened. I then eagerly inquired for what base purpose I was thus forcibly detained, and what it was they wanted with me.

“ Justice,

“ Justice, (replied the bully ; — justice only ! — Reverend father, (said he, addressing himself to the priest,) this fair damsel has been robbed of her peace : her virgin fame must be lost in consequence, unless that youth (pointing to me) will make her reparation, by giving her his hand in marriage. It is to join them in holy wedlock we sent for you.”

“ I was now enraged too much, (continued Walter,) to have longer any command over my passion. — I drew my sword, and vowed to sacrifice any one who should dare to prevent my leaving the infamous house into which I had been so artfully and basely trepanned.

The women now clung about me, while their bully endeavoured, but in vain, to wrest my sword from me. He then commanded the priest to do his office, and I know not, at that moment, what act of desperation I might not have committed, had

had not you, my guardian friend and preserver, luckily burst into the room, and prevented my ending that life in a brothel which you protected so many years in a dungeon."

Albert embraced his young lord with tears of gratified affection.

"Long, very long, (cried he,) may your life be guarded from every danger, and never experience a fate so disgraceful! I will inform the Baron of what has passed: he will very soon bring these wretches to the shame and punishment they so justly deserve."

"Not for worlds, my good Albert, would I have the story transpire! (said Walter.)—I already know enough of human nature to be satisfied that the recital of it would not only bring my father's displeasure upon me, but likewise the ridicule of the world. Be assured of this, I will
never

never again run the risk of being drawn into danger by forming an acquaintance with people, however specious their appearance, without their being well known to my father or yourself. All I beg of you is, to join with me in interceding with the Baron for permission to return to Bungay-castle. I will there wait his pleasure, without murmur or complaint, for the accomplishment of all my wishes. With Roseline de Morney I cannot be unhappy; — without her my soul can know no peace."

Albert promised to do what he could with the Baron, but requested his young lord not to be too sanguine in his hopes of prevailing on him to consent to his leaving London, till the time was expired that he had fixed for his stay, and on his promising not to offend him by disputing his will as to the length of his continuance in town, he agreed to conceal this unpleasant adventure from the Baron, strongly recommending

recommending him to be more guarded in future, and never to let his own unsuspecting nature lead him to conclude that the people he mixed with were as good and as artless as himself.

**CHAP.**

CHAP. IX.

FROM this time Walter became more and more dissatisfied with his situation. He no longer contended with the Baron respecting the length of his stay, or refused to accompany him whenever he was requested to any public amusement or private party. But he became so restless and internally wretched, that it became impossible to conceal entirely how much he was distressed.— He wrote many letters to Roseline. The following is a copy of that which he sent a few days after his being so fortunately saved
by

by Albert from the diabolical plan laid to render him miserable during life, and at the same time would have made the innocent Roseline as unhappy as himself.

My ever dear and charming Roseline,

I CANNOT live much longer in this detestable place, where the women are artful, the men base and designing. I am pointed at as being a fit dupe for vice to ensnare : my ignorance often leads me into error, and my own unsuspecting disposition exposes me to ridicule. If I must learn to be like the people with whom I often associate here, I shall grow in a little time so weary of existence, that I shall only wish it preserved on your account.

The immense distance between this place and the castle you inhabit renders it doubly detestable. It is a scene of bustle, confusion, and design : its amusements are all frivolous and trifling ; its pleasures are joyless, unsocial,

unsocial, and unsatisfactory, and I a mere cypher, dull and alone, amidst a crowd of beings, for whom I feel neither respect nor friendship. In fact, I am never more alone than when I am surrounded by hundreds of people, not one of whom cares for my happiness. I had rather be with you in one of the gloomiest dungeons of Bungay-castle than in the palace of our king, unless you were by my side.

I have seen a great many young ladies that are called beauties; but I think none of them half so beautiful as my gentle Roseline; neither do they appear so good humoured, nor is their dress so becoming, though they wear as many diamonds as you did on the fortunate morning you went to be married to my father. And would you think it?—one of them actually endeavoured to draw me in to marry her; though I repeatedly told her I could love no woman but you.

I have

I have neither spirits nor appetite ; I can neither laugh nor sing, and, if the Baron have a mind to make me polite,—if he wish me to acquire knowledge,—if he be desirous I should become what he calls an useful member of society, he must no longer keep us separate. It is your company only that could give a charm to that of other people, and, if I could see you, I should love the world for your sake. I shall die, dear Rose-line, unless they permit me to come to you.

Madeline, though she wept, was happy, and looked handsomer than ever ; and Edwin,—ah ! how I envied your brother Edwin ! He may be thankful he was not the son of a Baron, compelled like me to go through the tiresome drudgery of unmeaning ceremonies, and all the disgusting and nonsensical forms which they tell me belong to rank.—I am sure rank would be more valuable and happier without them, and dignity far more pleasant to its possessors, if they could divest themselves of pride.

Commend

• Commend me cordially to your parents.—
Tell your sisters I love them as a brother,
and make my respects to De Clavering, De
Willows, and the honest Cambrian, to whom
I hope one day to be of service.

Sweet Roseline, think of me, dream of
me, and love no one but me. My father is
very kind, very indulgent, and Albert very
good, for he will hear me talk of you for
hours together ; but neither the Baron nor
Albert can guess at the sufferings they inflict
on me by this tedious absence from you, to
whom I am indebted for life, hope, and hap-
piness.

Your's for ever,

WALTER FITZOSBOURNE.

When the above mentioned letter reached
the hands of the dejected Roseline, it a-
larmed and distressed her. It was however
accompanied by one from the Baron to Sir
Philip

Philip had no longer any fears but his friend would succeed in procuring a pardon for the fugitives. Again the family of De Morney were restored to their accustomed cheerfulness, and their friends admitted as usual; and, though Roseline shed some tears over the fond impassioned letter of Walter, they were tears of grateful tenderness, and she took care that her sighs and unceasing regret for the absence of her lover should be concealed from those to whom they would have given pain. Edeliza too was no longer under the unpleasant necessity of concealing her love for the worthy De Willows. The heart of Sir Philip was softened by the trials he had encountered, and all the parent was awakened in his soul. He therefore consented to the union of his second daughter taking place as soon as her lover could command an income sufficient to maintain a wife and family; and, as he had many friends in power, every one cherished hopes of his soon obtaining some distinguished preferment.

Audrey, who was still a great favourite with her young lady, was now solely retained to attend her person, and wholly at her command. She considered herself therefore of some consequence, and gave herself airs accordingly. She did not choose to mix with the common class of servants,—truly a lady's maid's place was a place of too much extinction to permit any familiarity with inferiors.—No sooner did Audrey see the family restored to their usual good humour, than she herself became more lively and chatty than ever, and all her fears of ghosts and hobgoblins were lost in her own self-importance and newly-acquired dignity. She afforded high entertainment not only to her fellow-servants, but to all the rest of the family, and, to make her character appear more ridiculous, her dress was as absurd as her sentiments.

Whenever chance threw Mrs. Audrey in their way, it was become a matter of course
to

to enter into conversation with her, and the vain Abigail was too proud of this flattering distinction not to make the most of it.

De Clavering, who was fond of the humorous, laughed at the absurdities of Audrey, and took every opportunity of shewing her off. One day, while he was sitting with Roseline in the apartment to which Walter had been removed, when released from his dungeon, Audrey came abruptly into the room, bringing in her arms the little dog frequently mentioned in the foregoing pages. She laid him on the lap of his fond mistress, and exclaimed, "There, madam, take the little wandering rascal. I have been in a fine quandary about him, and have had a blessed rambulation to find him, and drag him from his low-bred vulgar companions. To my thinks, he is as great a rake as the king himself, God bless his majesty; but the young Baron ought to have given him a better eddication than to keep company with his infeerors."

“ I am sure, Audrey, (said De Clavering,) you are much indebted to the young rascal, as you call him ; for the ramblation you complain of has given so fine a glow to your complexion, so much animation to each expressive feature, that may I die if I did not take you at first for a painted lady, and, had I met you in the passage, am afraid I should have been tempted to see whether those roses so fascinating and so blooming were borrowed or natural.”

“ Don’t talk to me of hannimation or fanfensation, (cried Audrey, indignantly drawing herself up several inches higher ;) I can assure you, Mr. Doctor, I don’t choose to be consulted. I neither buys, borrows, nor covets, roses ; I neither wants to tempt or be tempted by any one ; but if I was by chance to captify a sweetheart, I dares to say I should soon become pale enough ; for I thinks love is as bad as a ‘potticary’s shop.’”

“ I hope I have not offended you, Mrs. Audrey, (said De Clavering, laughing,) I only meant to be civil, and pay the tribute due

due to the bloom I observed upon your countenance."

"Fended or not, (replied Audrey,) it little matters. Servants, some folks thinks, must not look like other people, and their blooms must be suspected truly. However, as father Anselm often says, God made us all.—You might as well have been silent as to the matter of my looks. I don't want or wish gentlemen 'poticarys to ax me questions, or trouble their heads about me."

"You would not have been half so angry with Camelford, (said De Clavering,) had he said ten times as much to you as I have done, or had he kissed you as often as I once saw him, when you ran to him under the mulberry tree."

"I don't think she would, (said Roseline, smiling,) for I know our friend Hugh is a great favourite with every female in the family."

"Wery vell, miss, (replied Audrey, blushing as red as scarlet at the story of the mulberry-tree,) you have a mind I see to join

with the malicious doctor to dash and confound me ; but I defy his satirical talons, and can assure you, miss, though Mr. Camelford is so cetious and merry, he never proffered to kiss me more than half a dozen times in his life."

" Take care how you reckon, Audrey, cried De Clavering, humourously,) remember I saw you under the mulberry-tree."

" Well, what if you did?—You might as well have said nothing about it, (replied Audrey.)—I was frightened almost into highstericks by an ugly black cat jumping from a lylac bush, and I ran to Mr. Camelford without knowing what I did, and he was so civil and perlite, God bless his good-humoured heart, one must have been a savage to quarrel with him for a civil kiss or two : he does not flee or jeer people about their looks, or tells what he sees them doing."

Neither Roseline nor De Clavering could any longer refrain from laughing, and Camelford

melford that moment entering the room, Audrey was so much displeased, and in so great a hurry to be gone, that, in running to the door, she almost beat down her favourite.

“ Fat, in the name of Cot, (cried Hugh,) is the matter with the girl? She has as many freaks and fancies in her head as a mountain coat, and is as frolicksome too.”

“ You had better follow her, and make your inquiries, (said De Clavering;) I am satisfied the damsel would tell you what brought on her present disorder sooner than any body else.”

“ I am no doctor, (said Camelford,) therefore don't be playing tricks upon me, by sending me after the tamsel, and pringing little Perth's anger upon me, which, may I tie in a titch, if I know how to bear.”

“ Oh! if you are enlisted under petticoat government, (replied De Clavering,) I give you up as incurable,—a deserter from the

thorny paths of glory, and foresee the sword will be changed into a distaff or a ploughshare."

"Luf (cried Camelford) must not be abused ; it is the best stimulus to crate and noble actions, the parent of pold atchievements ; but of that same luf you know nothing : there is no heart in your pody, and you are mortified to think you cannot find a nostrum to cure the dilease in others : you must therefore be caught in luf's snares, in order to learn the nature of those treadful tribulations it brings upon a man. May I go to the tevil in a high wind, if I had not as lief face a canon's mouth as meet the fire of Perth's pright eyes, when they look indignantly upon me !"

"Don't talk so much of the devil, Hugh, (interrupted De Clavering,) but request him to do you the favour of kicking about your brains a little, till they return to a more useful station in your pericranium : in my opinion, you are in a fair way of becoming

coming fit for the government under which you think yourself enlisted."

"May the vengeance of all womankind fall upon you ! (cried Camelford :)—may you be tragged apout like a tancing pear, to make sport !—may you lead asses in the tark regions of Peelzebub, for your plasphemies against woman ! and may——"

But all his farther denunciations and wishes for vengeance on De Clavering were now interrupted by a loud screaming. Soon the door was thrown open, and in bounced Audrey, her cap on one side, and her face as pale as ashes.

"I have seen him, (she exclaimed,) with my own dear eyes !—his ghost, or happoration !"

"Whose cost ? (cried Camelford ;) where is it ?—I will teach a cost to frighten a pretty girl, and trive her tistracted."

The manner and appearance of Audrey were such as served to confirm the suspicion in the mind of Roseline, and even De Clavering, till, offended by the supposition of her being insane, she called out in her usual peculiar stile, "Thank God! some folks are no more a lunatic than other folks. I have all my seven senses as perfect as ever I had in my life;—but, Christ Jafus, these are sad times, when one is not allowed to believe their own precious eyes.—Down dropped his horse, poor beast, all in a foam, and down tumbled the young Baron arter him, as dead as my dear great grandmother."

"Who are you talking of? (cried Roseline, rising with the utmost emotion.)—Is the Baron?—is Walter?—is he dead?"

"He only died for a few minutes, (answered Audrey, and then he came to himself—"

She had time for no more. Roseline heard the well known step of her lover.—Walter rushed into the room, threw himself

at her feet, and the next instant caught her in his arms.

“ This moment (cried he) is that for which my heart has languished ! this is a reward for all my fatigue, all my fears and anxieties !— Look up, smile upon me, and say, my sweet Roseline, that my return gives to you an almost equal pleasure as myself ; but, first, let me inform you that I have left London without the knowledge and permission of my father.”

That Roseline rejoiced to see her lover her eyes informed him, but for a few minutes surprise and agitation kept her silent. Sir Philip, Lady de Morney, and the whole family, were soon assembled in the apartment to which Walter had been directed by Audrey.

The young Baron, it may be supposed, found a cordial reception, and it is not to be doubted but *that* he met with from the fair

object of his affection was such as amply repaid him for his fatigue, and in his own mind even, for the risk he had hazarded of disobliging his father. This step, however, was owing to a hint dropped by the Baron, that it would be agreeable and convenient, to himself, and necessary for many reasons to his son, that they should prolong their stay in town some weeks beyond what had been proposed, or intended on their departure from the castle.

On this plan being opposed by Walter, the Baron not only appeared displeased, but resolute to carry his point. A circumstance so distressing to his son rendered him equally determined not to submit to such arbitrary, and, in his opinion, cruel authority ; therefore, early the next morning he sat off, without being attended by a servant, or informing any one to what part of the globe he meant to go, and the next day reached Bungay castle in the manner before described.

Sir Philip de Morney, on learning these alarming circumstances from his daughter, immediately sent off an express to inform the Baron of his son's unexpected arrival, and of his apprehensions that the step he had so unguardedly taken would bring his displeasure upon himself and family, whom he seriously assured him knew nothing of his intention.

Walter, in his conversations with Roseline, told her, he found himself so disgusted with the customs and manners of the world, and met with so few people in it to whom he could attach himself, or for whom he felt either respect or affection, that he determined no longer to be detained from her in whose care his happiness was intrusted, and with whom alone he was satisfied it could rest secure.

“ And, as you condescended, (he continued,) to love and attend to me when immured in a dungeon,—kindly smiled on me,
and

and endeavoured to instruct me when enveloped in ignorance, and was my friend when I appeared to have no claims,—a solitary outcast from society, I thought you would not be very much displeased if I forsook the world for you, who gave up more, much more, for me, and quitted its gayest and most cheerful scenes for the solitary gloom of a prison.

“ Whatever I may still want of polish, address, and what fashionable people stile politeness, love and my gentle Roseline can easily teach me. From a world that I neither like nor approve, I could learn but little, while the chosen mistress of my heart may at her pleasure make me any thing she wishes. With her, and for her amusement, I may be sometimes tempted to live in a crowd ; without her, the world itself is only a wide extended dungeon.”

Roseline, at hearing this impassioned language from lips which, she was satisfied, knew

knew no guile, was too much gratified to express all she felt. She smiled on him through her tears, and, in the softest language affection could dictate, gently chid him for being so impetuous as to run the risk of disobliging his father on her account, expressing a few timid apprehensions that the Baron might be offended with her as being the innocent cause of his son's proving refractory to his wishes ; yet she could not help secretly rejoicing in the strength of his attachment, on which all her happiness depended.

Every thing was done by the family to give this amiable and singular lover a reception not only suitable to his elevated rank, but satisfactory to his feelings,—such an one as the sincerity of his regard for Rofeline demanded and deserved, while the joy which appeared upon the animated countenances of the lovers convinced every one who saw them, that they had fixed their hopes of felicity on a basis which the hand
of

of death only could shake from its foundations.

Walter, in his moments of unreserve, expressed his surprise, dislike, and contempt, of many things, persons, and customs, which he met with in the high circles to which he had been introduced, and concluded with wishing that the Baron could be prevailed upon to excuse his farther attendance, adding, it was his determined plan, so far as it met the approbation of his beloved Roseline, to spend as much of his time as the nature of his situation would permit in the placid bosom of retirement, in which he hoped to make himself as useful and worthy a member of the commonwealth as he should be if engaged in more bustling and busy scenes.

“One would think (said De Clavering, who happened to be present when this conversation occurred) that the young Baron had been educated by some of our wise and
ancient

ancient philosophers, and, taught by their precepts, was convinced by them that happiness was too timid and modest to be found in the confines of a court, or the splendors of a ball-room. It reminds me of Enthymenes, who, speaking of the pleasures of solitude to a man of the world, makes the following observations.

“ You are compelled to a continual restraint in your dress, demeanour, actions, and words :—your festivals are so magnificent, and our’s so mirthful !—your pleasures so superficial and so transient, and our’s so real and so constant ! Have you ever in your rich apartments breathed an air so fresh as that which we respire in this verdant arbour ? — or can your entertainments, sometimes so sumptuous, compare with the bowls of milk which we have just drawn, or those delicious fruits we have gathered with our hands ?

“ Ah !

“ Ah ! if happiness be only the health of
“ the soul, must it not be found in those
“ places, where a just proportion ever reigns
“ between our wants and our desires, where
“ motion is constantly followed by rest, and
“ where our affections are always accompa-
“ nished by tranquillity, breathe a free air,
“ and enjoy the splendor of heaven.—From
“ these kind of comparisons we may judge
“ which are the true riches that nature de-
“ signed for men.”

“ Such were the opinions and sentiments
of Enthymenes, and such I find are those
of De Claving, (replied Walter,) or he
would not have retained and repeated them
with so much facility and satisfaction. —
Were my fate united with that of Miss de
Morney, and had I two such friends as De
Claving and Albert, to direct my conduct
and enlarge the small portion of knowledge
I have yet been able to acquire, I should
think myself the most fortunate as well as
the happiest of mankind, having already
experienced

experienced a long series of oppression from the baneful arts and stratagems of ambition, I have learned to despise it, and, in the gloomy and trying hours of adversity, have been taught, that fortitude, with humility and untainted honour, can harmonize, but can never degrade the most exalted stations, and, while they are the brightest jewels that could adorn a crown, they enrich and ennoble the lowest peasant."

In a few days, the Baron, accompanied by Albert, arrived at the castle. The frown which appeared upon his brow, at his first entrance, was instantly dispersed when the trembling Roseline sunk at his feet, and entreated him to pardon the eccentric flight of her lover, of which, as she was the cause, if his displeasure continued, it would inflict equal distress upon herself as upon his son.

To resist so fair a suppliant was not in the Baron's power. He tenderly raised her
from

from the ground, and the next morning embraced her lover. The utmost harmony and a general cheerfulness soon prevailed, and, before the parties separated for the night, the Baron candidly and generously acknowledged, that, at the same age, and under the same circumstances as his son, he believed he should have acted as he had done. “And upon the whole, (said he,) I was not very sorry when the obstinate fighting boy took himself away; for I was grown weary of having to introduce, and make such frequent apologies for so absent, lifeless, and refractory a being.”

What served to reconcile matters the sooner was, that Albert, after the sudden disappearance of his young lord, had informed his father of Mrs. C——’s infamous stratagem to draw him into a marriage with her artful and abandoned daughter. He was so much enraged at hearing the lengths to which these wretches had dared to go, that

that strict search was made after them, but without effect.

Walter, too, told Roseline of the designs which had been formed to entrap him, and, while she looked at him with increased delight, she secretly rejoiced that he had left a place which harboured a set of people who gloried to destroy the peace of their fellow-creatures.

To make the happiness of the friendly party more perfectly complete, the Baron informed Sir Philip and Lady de Morney that he hoped very soon to procure a pardon for Edwin and Madeline, and to be able to restore them to their protection.

Preparations for the marriage very soon began, the Baron humourously observing, that, till his son was again deprived of his freedom, there would be no knowing how to secure, or what to do with him,
and

and declaring he should be very glad to delegate the care of him to one whom he had no doubt would supply his place much to the advantage of the charge he was ready and willing to give up.

Every appendage, that wealth could purchase, — rank require, — or youth and ambition wish to possess, — was liberally provided to grace the nuptials of Walter Fitzosbourne and the happy Roseline de Morney.

Ah ! how different were the feelings, — how delightful the prospects of the intended bride, on this occasion, to what they had been on a former one, when she prepared with such agonizing terrors to give her hand to the Baron ! — yet, though she could now think of approaching the altar without reluctance, she could not entirely divest herself of those timid fears which every gentle and virtuous female must experience when she recollects the
number

number of new duties upon which she is going to enter, and that, from the moment she becomes a wife, her happiness, no longer dependent on herself or parents, rests only on the man to whom she has given her hand.

Walter seemed to tread on air; he was all vivacity and joy, and appeared to have assumed a new character. The world, and every thing belonging to it, wore a different aspect:—all, all was charming. He wondered how he could ever have felt disgust, or cherished discontent. To his father he was attentive and affectionate,—to his friends cordial and complacent,—to his Roseline all that an affectionate lover could or ought to be.

Albert was almost as happy and joyous as his master. The Baron, serene, grateful, and contented, while Sir Philip and Lady de Morney, who found their own consequence and comforts so much increased

creased by this fortunate and splendid alliance, united in blessing the hour which sent their intended son-in-law a prisoner to Bungay-castle.



CHAP.

CHAP. X.

AT length the happy day arrived which was appointed for the celebration of these long expected nuptials. We presume that the morning, to the world in general, was exactly like what other mornings had been, and that the sun shone without any perceptible brilliancy being added to its rays, except in the eyes of the now happy lovers.

The company assembled in the breakfast-room, and for some time waited for Rose-line. She soon made her appearance, led

by her beloved Walter, who had stolen unobserved to the chamber-door of his mistress, to chide her for so long delaying his happiness. On this occasion he was splendidly attired, and the bride, elegantly but simply dressed, wanted not the borrowed aid of ornament, but, arrayed in maiden bashfulness and artless purity, appeared all native loveliness.

As she received the congratulations of her friends, a tear, which stole from her expressive eye as it trembled to escape, appeared the spotless harbinger of gratified affection, struggling to conquer the becoming fears of unaffected modesty.

As soon as breakfast was over, they were accompanied to the chapel of the nunnery by a numerous train of friends and dependents. On their arrival, they were met by the Lady Abbess, the venerable and worthy Father Anselm, and almost all the inhabitants of the nunnery, who were allowed to
assemble

assemble in the chapel on this joyous occasion, while every face wore the appearance of cheerfulness.

A select party went back with them to the castle, where all who chose were permitted to partake of the happiness, and share in the social satisfaction which universally prevailed.

Mutual congratulations and good wishes were exchanged. Sir Philip and Lady de Morney, happy as they were in the completion of their ambition, could not restrain the sigh of heart-felt regret at the thoughts of soon being separated from their beloved daughter.

Roseline was some time before she recovered her usual serenity, till Edeliza, on observing her shed a tear as she looked at her mother, said to her, in a whisper,—
“I cannot imagine, my dear sister, why you should weep. I do not think I should

be so 'dejected if I were married to De Willows,—though he never said half so many fine things to me as the young Baron has done to you."

Roseline, smiling, pressed the hand of her sister, and, returning her whisper, assured her she was indeed the most enviable of her sex :—but (added she) it requires more fortitude than I possess to support such happiness as mine with equanimity and composure; and the natural regret I cannot help feeling at leaving this place, and soon being separated from the best and tenderest of mothers, convinces me that Providence never intended we should enjoy bliss without alloy."

The next day the party sat off in new and splendid carriages, attended by a numerous retinue of servants, for the Baron's castle in the North of England. Their grand cavalcade brought a number of people to take a farewell look of the lovely bride,

bride, whose departure was generally regretted; and she was followed by the good wishes of all who ever had the pleasure of enjoying her society.

Sir Philip and Lady de Morney, her two sisters, De Willows, De Clavering, and Hugh Camelford accompanied her. Audrey had likewise the honour of attending her lady as *file de chambre*, and never felt herself of such infinite consequence as she did when handed into the travelling carriage by the Baron's gentleman, who did her the honour to assist in packing her up to the chin amidst the boxes and luggage entrusted to her care.

The party travelled slowly and pleasantly, stopping to see every thing on their route that was worthy observation; and, as they were now in the humour to be easily pleased, they were consequently amused and gratified with almost every thing they saw.—It is a kind of humour so extremely convenient,

nient, that I hope we shall be excused for recommending the adoption of it to travellers of all countries and denominations,—good humour, and serenity of mind, being the best companions at home, are equally eligible to carry with us when we go abroad.

On their arrival at Fitzo'bourne-castle, they received a considerable increase to their happiness by meeting Edwin and Madeline in perfect health and good spirits.—Sir Philip and Lady de Morney's cup of joy was filled to the brim, when they found themselves folded in the arms of their long absent children, for whose lives they had so often, and indeed at this very moment inwardly trembled.

The happy bride of the exulting Walter felt such a torrent of added felicity, on being folded in the arms of her brother and Madeline, that she was very near fainting.

ing. Observing this, the Baron, to call off their attention, desired them to permit him to come in for some share of their embraces, and in his turn to welcome them to Fitz-osbourne-castle. This had the effect it was designed to produce, and the cordial welcome every one received from the Baron gave additional satisfaction to the hours thus marked with joy, happiness, and love.

After they had taken some refreshment, Edwin surprised them all by approaching the Baron, and in the most submissive manner begging him to pardon the liberty he had taken in introducing a guest to the castle, whom, as yet, he knew not of being there,—a guest old and weak, but who was, he hoped, slowly recovering from an attack of illness so severe, as to have threatened his life, and which, in all probability, would have terminated his mortal existence, but for the unremitting attention he received from the Baron's domestics.

“No apology is necessary upon such an occasion, (said the Baron.) Had my people been wanting in care to any one who required their assistance, I should have instantly dismissed them.—When may I be introduced to your friend? (added he.)—I am impatient to assure him that this house, and all that it contains, are much at his service.”

“Pray, my dear Edwin, (said Lady de Morney,) who is the person for whom you have ventured to tax the Baron’s hospitality thus largely, and for whom you appear so much interested?”

“The father of this lady, (replied he, taking the hand of Madeline, and leading her to his mother.)—To her I will refer you for an account of our meeting, and the revolution it has fortunately produced in our favour.

Madeline was instantly called upon to gratify the curiosity of the company, and, without

without any delay, informed them, that Edwin and herself having one day agreed to take a ramble, they told the people with whom they lodged that they should not return till the evening.

Disguising themselves more than usual, so as to avoid the possibility of being discovered, they sat off; and, being tempted by the extreme fineness of the day, wandered till they came to the great road which led to a large town, not five miles distant.

“In fact, (said the blushing narrator,) my dear Edwin, was grown weary of solitude, and wished perhaps to see more faces than those which he met in the obscure little cottage to which we were confined.”

Every one smiled,—Edwin looked confused,—and Madeline thus proceeded.

“We had not walked more than half a mile in the great road, before the number

of people we met, and the curiosity our strange appearance excited, determined us to choofe a more private walk ; but, juft as we were going to turn into a lane which led to a neighbouring village, our attention was caught, and our design prevented by a carriage being overturned within a hundred paces of us.

“ The horfes, proving reftive, had drawn it up a high bank, which occafioned the accident. One of the fervants, feeing Edwin, beckened him, and begged him to affift in lifting it up, and liberating his mafter from his perilous fituation. He immediately ran off, telling me to fit down on the bank till his return.

“ Thinking, however, that I might poffibly be of fome fervice, I walked slowly forwards ; but guefs my terror, when, juft as we arrived at the carriage, they were dragging from it a man to all appearance dead.

“ I

“ I instantly flew to lend my assistance ; but no sooner did I distinguish his person, than I was nearly as lifeless as himself.—It was my father,—my father dying on the road ! The sight, however terrifying to my fears and torturing to my feelings, gave me strength, and inspired me with fortitude to help in preserving the life of the author of my being.

“ I took an opportunity to inform my dear Edwin who it was that claimed our care and attention. After chafing his temples, and rubbing his emaciated hands, some faint signs of life reanimated our endeavours.

“ We found, by the conversation of the servants, that their master had been recommended to try what change of air and travelling might do, as medicine had failed in removing a disease which had long preyed upon his constitution, and which had been increased by some domestic sorrow.

“ Alas ! of that sorrow I knew myself to be the cause, and the tears which I shed upon his almost lifeless hand, as I saw him extended at my feet, atoned I hope, in some measure, for the grief I had inflicted.

“ When life was more perfectly restored, we moved him upon a grass plat, till the carriage and horses could be got ready.— He took no notice of any one, and appeared to be totally insensible of the accident, and of every thing around him.— This at once determined us to intrude on the Baron’s goodness, and convey him to this castle.

“ Having dispatched a messenger for the best advice we could procure, one of his attendants and myself accompanied him in the carriage. His head rested on my bosom, but he knew me not, nor once attempted to speak. On our arrival here, we found every thing prepared for our reception, Edwin having taken one of the horses

horses, and rode full speed to inform the Baron's servants a sick gentleman was coming, for whom he requested their care and assistance.

“ My father was taken from the carriage, and instantly put to bed. Two medical gentlemen very soon arrived, who, on examining the state of their patient, from the violence of the contusion and the total deprivation of sense in which they found him, seemed to think there was a concussion of the brain. They assured us, however, that his life would not be endangered by the accident, but said, they saw he was far advanced in a decline, from which they apprehended more fatal consequences.

“ We continued our disguise, and, as our real names were totally unknown in this neighbourhood, having passed for a Mr. and Mrs. Danbury, we were under no apprehensions of being discovered, should my father recover his senses. After remaining

in the most painful state of suspense many days, he began to take notice of those who attended him, but made no inquiries after his own servants, how he came into a strange place, or the accident which had befallen him. One day, as I was sitting by him, and holding his head, which I had been rubbing with vinegar, he looked earnestly at me.

“ If I did not think, if I did not know it was impossible, (said he, in hurried accents, looking first at me, and then at Edwin, who was standing at the foot of the bed,) I should almost be tempted to believe that the hand which has so gently given me relief was the hand of Madeline de Glanville, and that face the face I once fondly doated upon ; but it cannot be !— I am a poor, wandering, old man, whose eyes must be closed by strangers, and I deserve it should be so. I once had a daughter, but I banished her my sight :—I had a son,

son, but he perhaps is no longer an inhabitant of this world."

Here he stopped, and burst into a violent flood of tears. By a sign from Edwin I understood he wished me to take this favourable opportunity of making the discovery, for which he knew I languished. Falling therefore, on my knees, in the most supplicating attitude, and pressing his hand to my lips, I exclaimed :

"I am your daughter,—your Madeline, and there is the amiable, the beloved husband for whom I dared to disobey my father, and for whom at this moment I stand a trembling victim to the just laws of my country and my religion !"

The scene which followed it is not in my power to describe. Suffice it to say, that, from that interesting period, my father has not only been reconciled, but renovated with health and strength. He frequently laments.

laments the obstinacy which reduced us to the necessity of taking such steps to prevent our separation. He has written letters to every one he knows that has any interest with the higher powers of the church, but his hopes of success are rested upon Lord Fitzosbourne, to whom he is impatient to pay his respects."

"This moment I am ready to attend him, (said the Baron :) the father of Madeline is entitled to every attention that has, or can be shewn him."

After his lordship's visit had been paid, the rest of the party followed of course, and a general harmony prevailed. Mr. de Glanville was instantly placed wholly under the care of De Clavering, and soon obtained as perfect a state of convalescence as the nature of his constitutional habits would admit.

Now

Now again hospitality and festivity took their turn to reign, and the happy and distinguished Walter, after languishing so many years in misery and confinement, found himself in the situation for which nature had designed him.

Restored to his rank in the bosom of affluence, and surrounded by tender and admiring friends, he soon lost that timid shyness which had once rendered him averse to society, and discontented with the world. United to the only woman he had ever loved, and possessed of domains more extensive and fertile than those of many a petty prince, with a mind calculated to promote the happiness of his fellow-creatures, he was beloved by all, and envied by many.

In a few months a full and free pardon was procured for Edwin and Madeline, and Mr. de Glanville, having recovered,

covered, contrary to the expectation of every one, from the indisposition which threatened him with death at the time his daughter escaped from the Bungay nunnery, on being convinced she had made so respectable and worthy a choice, gave her a considerable portion, and afterwards, having the fears of his son's death realized, she inherited his whole estate. Edwin also rose to high rank in the army, and was an honour to his country.

Edeliza was happily married in due time to her beloved De Willows, and, about six years after, the worthy Hugh Camel-ford led the blooming and unreluctant Bertha to the altar. — To these young men the Baron uniformly remained a bountiful and steady patron, and Sir Philip and Lady de Morney lived many years to be grateful and happy spectators of the felicity and prosperity of their children.

The

The Baron and his son became so sincerely attached to De Clavinger during his visit at Fitzosbourne-castle, that, in compliance with their urgent and repeated entreaties, he consented to remain in their neighbourhood.

He very soon afterwards married a lady of respectability and fortune, and his practice became so extensive, and so much esteemed, that his superior knowledge proved a general blessing, of which many hundreds of his fellow-creatures in a few years experienced the benefit.

The Baron was highly delighted with the society of De Clavinger, and it was with the utmost reluctance he ever consented to his being a day absent from the neighbourhood.

It was the intention of the Baron, after he had seen his son fixed, and his household properly

properly established, to have resided in another of his castles, about twenty miles distant, but neither Walter nor Roseline would consent to the proposal.

They reminded the Baron of the long and cruel separation which had divided him from his son in the early part of his life, and so earnestly entreated him not to interrupt their happiness, by withdrawing himself from their society, and refusing to reside with them, that, pleased and gratified by the tenderness with which the request was mutually urged, he yielded to their persuasions, and a proper suite of rooms, with a large retinue of servants, were set apart for the immediate use of the Baron.

He continued to live with them many years, without any interruption to his happiness; and, in seeing the harmony and felicity

felicity they enjoyed, surrounded by a number of lovely and healthy grand-children, he found, amidst the increasing infirmities of old age, sufficient attractions in life to make it pleasant and desirable, while the cordial affection and exemplary conduct of his son, joined to the endearing attentions of the gentle and beloved Roseline, made him remember with joy and gratitude the day in which he saw their hands united.

Albert never left his beloved master, but was as faithfully attached to his children as he had been to himself. He had apartments appropriated to his use, a servant to attend him, and met, in the kind and unceasing attentions of his grateful friends, the just reward of his long tried fidelity.

Often, in the dreary winter evenings, having drawn all the younger part of the family around him, he would recite the incidents

incidents of his life from the period of his confinement with Walter. To the young Fitzosbournes it was a high treat to hear Albert tell the tale of their beloved father's life.

Sometimes he would excite their wonder, and entertain them with the surprising effect of his double voice ; and, when he became a very old man, he was as much beloved for what he had been, as he was respected for his age, grey hairs, and universal philanthropy.

Though many overtures were made by the worthless brother of the Lady Isabella to bring about a reconciliation, neither the Baron nor his son could ever be prevailed upon to see him, and it was with some difficulty the former was persuaded to give up bringing him to justice for the crime he had committed.

The

The good abbess and the venerable father Anselm had the pleasure of seeing their favourite Madeline as happy in the arms of her worthy husband, as they had hoped she would have been in the bosom of their church. Walter and his Roseline paid them many visits before they were removed from their exemplary calling on earth to receive the reward of their purity and virtue in the regions of immortality.

The hero and heroine of our tale retained the virtues of their youth, the gentleness of their manners, and the sweetness of their dispositions to the end of their lives; and, what may be thought more rare and singular, they never lost their humility, tenderness, and unbounded affection for each other; but when age, that grave of beauty, had robbed them of those outward graces, which nature with an unsparing hand had bestowed upon their youth, love maintained its empire in their faithful bosoms, and survived every change, till death summoned

summoned them to meet the bright and unfailing recompense of a life spent in the practice of religion, justice, and virtue.

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